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MRS. HORACE DOBELL.
AT HOME.

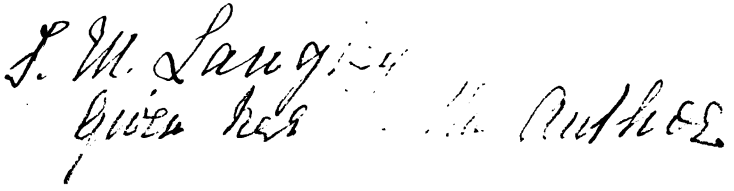

Plate I.—Copy of Portrait by J. Archer, 1865, æt. 37.
Taken just before the Scarlet Fever Illness.

MRS. HORACE DOBELL AT HOME:

A LIFE SKETCH.

ILLUSTRATED BY

Selections from her Works, Portraits, and other Plates.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WERTHEIMER, LEA & CO.,
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1908.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE greater part of this Sketch was written at the request of the Editor of "*The Biographical Magazine*" in 1887, but Mrs. Dobell objected to any biography being published during her lifetime, and it was therefore put aside. The story has now been brought up to date.

List of her Works at present published or printed privately, with dates:—

"Eveline," printed privately and anonymously, 1852.

"Ethelstone," printed privately and anonymously, 1854.

"Life Behind Her Screens; or, Lifted Veils." Published by Wertheimer & Co., 1880.

"*Versus* A Woman *Pro* Women"; "A Man's Thoughts about Men"; and other Articles. Wertheimer, 1880.

"Ethelstone, Eveline, and other Poems." "Legends of the Castle and Tales of the Village" (Collected Poems). Kegan Paul & Co., 1881.

"Dark Pages; or, the Secrets of an Old Bureau." Three vols. 1882. Remington & Co.

"In the Watches of the Night." Eighteen vols. Vol. I. 1884—Vol. XVIII. 1888. Containing over sixteen hundred separate poems. Remington & Co.

All the works are now out of print, and the authoress has left in manuscript a second and third series of "In the Watches of the Night" sufficient to form twenty-six volumes corresponding to the eighteen volumes already published.

Sketch of a Portrait by Bet Hast
1883. æt. 25

Plate II.—From a Pencil Sketch of a Portrait by her Husband, 1853, æt. 25.

[See p. 30.]

Plate III.—Portrait from a Photograph [illegible] 1854.

Plate IV.—Sandon Village. The Sexton's Cottage on the right, the "Six Bells" Inn on the left.
From a Pencil Sketch by Mrs. Horace Dobell *before her Marriage.*

The Sexton's Cottage on the right, the "Six Bells" Inn on the left.
From a Pencil Sketch by Mrs. Horace Dobell *before her Marriage.*

and Village.

Plate V.—Sandon Church and Sexton's Cottage, showing the end of the old Manor House, "Sandon Bury," with Outbuildings. The Poetess's Old Bedroom Window is on the right margin.

From a Water-Colour Sketch by Dr. Horace Dobell.

[See p. 7.]

Chaldon Church and Sexton's Cottage, showing the end of the old Manor House. "Spurle

Plate VI.—The back of Odsey House, with Piazza leading to the great Kitchen.
From a Pencil Sketch by Mrs. HORACE DOBELL *before her Marriage.*

Plate VI.—The back of Odsey House, with Piazza leading to the great Kitchen.
From a Pencil Sketch by Mrs. HORACE DOBELL *before her Marriage.*

Plate VII.—One end of the Picture Gallery at Streate Place, Bournemouth.
From a Photograph.

Plate VII.—One end of the Picture Gallery at Streate Place, Bournemouth.
From a Photograph.

Plate VIII.—Lawn Front of "Parkstone Heights," Dorset. (Separated by a Raised Walk 10 ft. and 20 ft. wide, and a Dwarf Hedge, from a Lawn 70 ft wide and 170 ft. long.)

III.—Lawn Front of "Parkstone Heights," Dorset. (Separated by a Raised Walk 10 ft. [illegible] ft. wide, and a Dwarf Hedge, from a Lawn 70 ft wide and 170 ft. long.)

Plate IX.—Mrs. Horace Dobell's Grave in Parkstone Cemetery the day after the Funeral.

MRS. HORACE DOBELL AT HOME.

WHATEVER may be the exact precedence eventually assigned to Mrs. Horace Dobell by the Heralds of Poetry, her history leaves no room for doubt that she possessed the first essential title to a good place on their roll, viz., that she was born a poet.

The first strong impulses of her intellectual life were poetic, and, after about seventy years of active work, they were poetic still.

She began to write verses and romances before she could correctly spell the words, and in her earliest girlhood crammed every scrap of paper she could obtain, back and front, with her compositions and notes, many of them, in the hurry and press of the impulse, being scribbled on the margins of old bits of newspapers. They were in all styles of verse and subject, from lyrics, odes and philosophic musings, to lengthy reveries and legendary ballads. But wildness, romance and contemplation were generally the leading characteristics.

Mrs. Horace Dobell was the third daughter of Mr. G. G. Fordham, of Odsey House, Cambs., a very long-lifed family. Her great uncle, referred to on p. 9, died in 1847, in his 98th year, and her cousin, Mr. Frederick Nash Fordham, who was born nineteen years before she was, did not die till 1905. A Royston paper says: "Mr. Frederick Nash Fordham, the banker, who has died in his ninety-sixth year, was a member of an old family associated with the neighbourhood as landowners for *centuries*, and connected with the public life of the town and district as bankers for the last hundred years."

Amongst "scraps written between the ages of ten and sixteen," one of the earliest preserved is "A Moorish Burial Chant," beginning

We lay her in her last still home, the dark and dreary grave,
Though she is fairer than the flowers that o'er her sadly wave.

Another is "A Question"—

Hast thou forgotten that green, shady slope,
Where once we sat and talked of love, alone;
When thy soft eyes were full of light and hope,
And mine were almost joyous as thine own?
Hast thou forgotten that dark, spreading tree,
Beneath whose shade I told fond tales to thee?

Somewhere about this period was written "Fragments of a Legend," consisting of an introduction and three cantos, written in the ballad style, thus—

Music was heard and wine was poured
That night at Hugh O'Neil's proud board;
His lofty halls rang back again
With laughter and with minstrel's strain;
And jewels flashed in raven hair,
For young and graceful forms were there;
Yet still the Chief looked sternly on,
With brow and lips stern-set and wan.

And another legend, called "Wolfine the Avenger," is in a similar style, thus—

Soon not a voice and scarce a breath
Disturbed the gloomy field of death;
Not even the vulture's savage croak
Through the dull, heavy vapours broke.
Until, on that grim battle plain
Was heard to pass a plaintive strain,
That grew in volume and in power
With the slow deepening of the hour.

"Rejoice! Rejoice! ye shadowy dead,
Lift each of ye a ghastly head;
Raise each of ye a blood-stained hand;
Rise up—a strong, if phantom, band."

In a totally different style we find, at about the same period, "*L'histoire se répète*"—

The little stream that rises from the hill
Swells to a mighty river at its base,
Bearing broad ships upon its bosom; still
We see the same marked features on its face.
A thousand years—the world is still the same:
Gloomy with tempests, sparkling in the sun;
Nature and ages differ but in name,
The next will finish what was last begun;
E'en Nature's face scarce shows a wrinkle more,
Though kingdoms change and centuries roll o'er.

One of the most perfect of her earlier poems that has been published is a "Dirge of the Red Indian Warrior"—

Go to thy rest!
Not where the tall and calm magnolias bow
Slowly and solemnly each snowy crest;
Beneath the violet grass we lay thee now.
Not where the pine
With dreary sighing echoed back thy tread
When forest-dwellers made beneath its shrine
The ancient sleeping-places of their dead.
Not where the stream
Beneath the arching wild-vine whispers low,
With spirit voices, when the sun's last beam
Falls where it bathes thy warrior's dust, we go!
To thy dark bed
We would not that sad music's wail should come,
Nor see men bow the plumed and glittering head
In stately march to the deep-sounding drum.

They mock us well!
With drooping banners and the hollow sound
Long pealing from the battlements, to tell
That thou, our brave, at last hast ransom found.

We do not weep;
Thy brothers have no tears to shed for thee;
Smiling we gaze upon the dreamless sleep,
The fetters broken and the captive free!

Hither we bring,
Ere yet the earth on thy cold brow we lay,
Thy boy! for one wild moment here to cling,
In love's first sorrow, to thy lips of clay.

Bend low and near,
Nor sigh, nor moan must break our chief's repose;
Yet—boy—in thy young heart be written here
A deep and burning memory of his foes!

"An Appeal to France," written one evening in 1848, on hearing the rumour, happily false, of a fresh revolution in France. This spirited poem was written at the age of twenty, and may further illustrate the poet's variety of style in her early life—

I would not seek to argue with thee, France!
The sophist's triumph never lit my brow;
And if it had, but small would be the chance,
'Gainst one renowned for subtlety as thou.
But to thy feelings, to thy heart I would
Appeal, even in thy present angry mood;
For thou hast much within thee true and good,
Mixed with the recklessness of thy half-southern blood.

I would not argue of decree, or law,
But to thy sad experience appeal;
Thy right to right thyself dispute not, nor
Bid thee for monarchs more respect to feel.

For there may be oppression we know not,
I would not bid thee tamely to submit;
Thou may'st *mean* well, but hast thou, then forgot
Thou can'st not quench at will a flame so madly lit?

Hast thou no other method of redress
Than that fierce weapon now upraised by thee?
Must, then, the cry of terror and distress
Follow the steps that seek for Liberty?
Alas! in these "enlightened" times, must still
The trumpet's clang sound o'er the startled earth?
Thy daughters' eyes with tears of anguish fill,
From fear to what dark woes its echoes may give birth.

Yes! "Mourir pour la patrie!" be thy cry;
Yes! battle—but against a foreign foe;
Lift not thy warlike arm so madly high,
Against *thyself* must now rebound that blow.
Go forth into the battle if thou wilt,
Thou hast brought out thy sword—gird on that sword!
But not by thee thy brother's blood be spilt,
Or dare not let *thy country* be the rousing word.

I would remind thee of a time gone by,
When a dark curse had fallen on thy land,
And nations looked upon thee with a sigh,
Or pointed at thee with deriding hand.
I would recall to thee a fatal tale,
By gory fingers on thy annals traced,
I would recall to thee a long, sad wail
That rang, then, shuddering, o'er thy country's ghastly waste.

Forget it not! that cry so madly wild
Against thee unto God in judgment rose;
Forget it not! thy hearth was then defiled
By all the crimes that man's dark bosom knows.
Remember! if, as in that hellish time,
Thou did'st pretend oppression's bonds to free,
Yet loosened but the chains of rage and crime;
Great was thy punishment, and great again shall be!

Specimens of many other styles and subjects will appear as we go on, but these must suffice for the present, while we proceed with our narrative.

The sixth of a family of five sons and four daughters, born on March 8th, 1828, in an old Hertfordshire Manor House* adjoining the ancient church of a rural village about five miles from the nearest little country town, surrounded by large farmsteads, and nearly all the country houses for miles round occupied by members of her father's family, Mrs. Dobell began life with a merry childhood, joining heartily with her brothers in their country pursuits. She often amused children by recounting feats of childish daring, such as walking along the ridges of immense barns, wandering over marsh grounds on high stilts, helping her brothers to build wooden houses among the branches of the great trees, and galloping over the hedges and ditches of the Hertfordshire heaths, on ponies or horses, of which there was always a good supply in the Manor stables. These exploits were varied by nutting excursions and flower, butterfly and birds'-nest hunting in the surrounding woods, or in following the sportsmen through turnip fields laden with early dew or hoar frost.

It was well that she had tasted of such childish delights, for her young life was soon to be clouded with many melancholy episodes, the influence of which is to be traced in her poems.

In her early girlhood she developed strong tastes for music and drawing, making paintings of all the wild flowers of the districts, and sketches of everything

* Many descriptions of the old houses and neighbouring country are given by the poetess in "Life Behind Her Screens," "Dark Pages," and elsewhere, and a pencil drawing of the old inn nearly opposite the church and manor house is here copied. (See Plate.)

—sketchable and unsketchable—within reach of her home; especially selecting moonlight, and grim drawings of that old village church and churchyard that could be seen from her little bedroom window. (See Plate.)

Music she learnt as best she could from her sisters, who had taken lessons at a country school, but chiefly through her own exertions; for there were no teachers to be had without going to Cambridge, to which there was no coach from the village. Somehow or other she mastered it, both vocally and instrumentally, up to a point—vocal music afterwards developed into a passion. By chance, when staying with some friends at a country town, she learnt that the then celebrated Mrs. Alban Croft (an Italian professor of singing) was teaching in the neighbourhood, and she seized the opportunity to take "six lessons" out of her pocket money. Mrs. Alban Croft discovered that she had a voice of the purest soprano type, and took great interest in her pupil; but the time of the visit was too short to allow the teacher to do more than set her pupil on the first step of what afterwards developed into a marvellous capacity. It was after her marriage and removal to London, under the teaching of Miss Helen Cundell (Madame Greiffenhagen), who had lately come to London and married, after acting as *prima donna* at some Continental opera houses, that Mrs. Dobell became distinguished, in *private* London society for the loveliness and great capacity of her voice and for the skill and sweetness with which she used it; especially was it noted for its almost interminable "breath" and equality of vocalisation in the longest and most difficult "shakes," such as that in the "Carnival of Venice," set by Adolph Adam, which was one of her favourites. In the large and

brilliant medical and scientific conversaziones and soirées, for which her husband's house in Harley Street became famous, one of the greatest attractions was usually an "amateur concert," in which Mrs. Dobell took the most difficult soprano parts. Some old programmes of these entertainments lie before us, and indicate the extent of her powers. These musical talents were to a certain extent inherited by her eldest daughter, who, at an early age, joined in the instrumental parts of these concerts with much éclat.

But to return to the life before marriage. The old Manor House possessed a numerous and well-selected library of standard books, and these were devoured with avidity by the young girl—heavy and light, nothing came amiss. Rollin, Gibbon, Russell, Scott, Ossian, Scientific Dialogues—a special favourite, Pope, Dryden, Milton, Bunyan, Defoe, Edgeworth, Porter, etc., etc., and the circulating library at the county town was called upon for everything it could supply. French, German and Italian were studied without masters, and worked at with characteristic determination, assisted by an unusually clear and quick memory, until Madame de Stäel, Chateaubriand, Sevigné, Schiller, Goethe, Tasso, etc., etc., could be enjoyed in their native languages. To all this was added a craving for religious and theological studies, and many controversial essays were written on these subjects, some of which appeared in the pages of a religious "Manuscript Magazine," which was at that time in vogue.

But the poetry went on through all, constituting the dearest veins, for the working of which time was always found, by night or by day. Many verses were published from time to time in the columns of the county paper, the

"*Mark Lane Express*"; and this led to an odd episode—a romantic poetical corespondence commenced and was carried on in the paper between a young lady living with her parents in the vortex of fashionable London society and the poetess of the old Manor House, who, at that time, had scarcely seen the Great City. Many congenial themes were found, and a friendship sprang up between the two girls, which continued up to the time when both had long been married and had grandchildren.

Threatenings of a great cloud were gathering over the young poetess's home at about this period of her life. Her paternal grandfather and his brother had entered upon a Chancery suit to settle a long-standing dispute as to the succession of some important estates, long held by her grandfather, some of which were occupied by her father. He was the third son, and a special favourite with his father, who brought him into this suit; while the first son, who was a favourite and chief beneficiary of the antagonistic uncle, was brought by him into his suit. This uncle, the great-uncle of the poetess, who lived to nearly one hundred, was the one described by her in the comic "Impromptu Lines on My Uncle"—

I had an uncle in former days,
A gentleman known for eccentric ways;
A grey old banker, and one, it seems,
With all the money that "banking" means.
But he lived in an unpretending street,
In a shabby house, for extremes *will* meet,
With a shabby carriage and servants as bad;
All called him stingy—none called him mad.
I dined with him once, and I thought to eat
A dinner of soup, of fish and meat,

Some pudding to follow, perhaps, beside,
Some fruit from a garden that seemed his pride,
So full of cherries and green young peas;
Alas! for me, we had none of these.
But you'll not believe it, you hardly *can*,
Unless you had known the sort of man—
The miserly rich! This dinner was not
Of fish, flesh, or fowl, or even hot,
But only a joint of fat, salt pig!
'Twas a cheek, I think, it was rather big
For only two; as for pudding, or spice,
Or custard, ah! me; there was nothing so nice.
"Mine uncle" quitted the world one day,
One winter's morn, in the oddest way;
His men were clearing a muddy pond,
Once used for fish, in the field beyond;
And the work was hard, or the men were idle,
And he, who couldn't his temper bridle,
At once declared, with an angry shout,
They didn't know what they were about,
And *he* would show them the way to do it;
And so he did, but he lived to rue it,
Or, rather, died from the lesson taught,
So fatal the chill that the teacher caught.

The family war thus begun between the two brothers of one generation and the two brothers of the next generation, was doomed, as it proved, to be fought out to the death. No doubt of *success* had been permitted on the part of the possessors and their lawyers, when the grandfather died in the heat of the battle, bequeathing to his youngest son—the poetess's father—a solemn charge to continue the struggle.

Now the clouds began to thicken faster and faster; the expenses of the suit poured in, hostile feelings between the two branches of the family became more intense, as the possibility of conquest brightened on

the one side, and the horrors of defeat dawned upon the minds of the possessors. Ghosts of possible poverty stalked about at night utterly absorbing the family thoughts, and casting a solemn gloom upon the house.

A new complication, too, had arisen, the dread of the first death in the house. The eldest son had returned from his professional studies in London smitten with consumption. In the forlorn hope of saving her brother, whose mother was now more than occupied in sustaining her husband in his troubles, the young poetess threw herself into the breach, giving up all her former pursuits to nurse and tend the invalid, acting as his amanuensis, reading to him, watching, and trying to comfort him through long, dreary months, but all in vain. At last, when his days were drawing very near their end, and in the midst of a rigorous winter, the thunderbolt fell —the Chancery suit was lost! And, despite the dying son and the dangerous season, no respite was allowed when the appointed day arrived for *turning them out of their old home.*

Fortunately, in anticipation of this possible defeat, and as some reward for his part in the fight, the father had left his son a beautiful little estate of some 300 acres, which could not be touched by the Chancery suit, and a lovely old house and grounds, built and laid out by one of the Dukes of Devonshire. (See Plate.) To this the family removed from their birthplace, and there in the midst of a doubly heart-broken family the invalid soon died. Now came the climax of their disaster; all rents, tythes, etc., of the lost estates, and the various perquisites from three manors,* of which the poetess's father had long

* He was Lord of the Manors of Sandon, Lufnell and Cromer.

been lord, were ordered by the Court of Chancery to be returned, dating the accumulation from the date of the first occupancy of the disputed estates. Thus were the family coffers drained from month to month and year to year, until all was paid. Nothing but the strictest economy and self-denial, causing all luxuries to be abandoned, the establishment to be cut down to the lowest practicable dimensions, and all hands to help in its working, enabled them to hold their own; and long before these difficulties were over the father of the house died, worn out with accumulated disappointments and vexations. As her two eldest sisters were now married,* the poetess, at the age of nineteen, was left as the chief help and companion of her widowed mother.

Her father and brother were both buried in a private mausoleum in the grounds of the present estate, and thus the memory of the past gloom were ever kept in mind, as evidenced in many poems written about this time, as, for example, in "Thoughts in the Chamber of Death"—

1st Verse.

Men pass it by, that solitary light
That shines from death's sad chamber through the night,
Nor ask they why it glimmers there so late;
The grief within is friendless, desolate.
In loneliness our vigil we must keep,
The stars look on, but marvel why we weep;
There is no sympathy in outward things
With the deep woe that oft the human bosom wrings.

* * * * * * *

* The second to Sydney Dobell the poet.

6th Verse.

Yea! we unto ourselves a world would make,
Unlike the one we live in; peopling it
With forms decay knows not, for whose sweet sake
To live, with whose fond feelings ours to knit;
Fearing no more that, when we love them most,
Beneath their firm young feet may yawn the tomb;
That when we call them ours with love's sweet boast,
Even then they may depart and leave the world in gloom.

7th Verse.

Vain fancy! near the spot where death is shrouded
The wild flowers bloom and deck the mossy stone—
Their bluebells, like a summer sky, unclouded;
Within, but not without, Death, is thine own.
So sing me, while the summer days are ours;
Alas! those days depart and we awake,
And find we only dreamed; the fair young flowers
Depart, and all but death that silent mound forsake.

Between the death of her eldest brother and her father, other anxieties had crowded round the girl's young life. Her eldest living brother and the brother next to and younger than herself—her favourite companion—dispirited by the gloomy collapse of their father's fortunes, and dazzled by the dreams of re-establishing them in an El Dorado, determined to join the party of early pioneers to the first "Californian gold-diggings." They had never travelled before, even in their own country, knew nothing of the world, of rough life, or of real hardship, and despite all persuasions to the contrary, with the rashness of ignorance, left their homes, certain in their own minds of a triumphant return to recompense their parents and their sister for this new blow. But they were horrified beyond measure at the immoral atmosphere at "the diggings," and, poisoned by the unhealthy surroundings, they became

prostrated by fever, thus losing their chances of gain, and being forced to spend the money they took with them, and they were too proud to apply for more, even could they have communicated with home. After many wretched months, and after they were supposed to be dead, in the middle of a winter's night, half-starved and in rags, they dragged themselves back to their father's house. The youngest son had received his deathblow, and after lingering for some years, died of consumption. The elder brother never settled down again in England, and after a disappointment in love, went out to New Zealand; when, just as he was retrieving his fortunes, he was lost, with all his possessions, at sea.

The return of the brothers from the "diggings," and "the shipwreck," are graphically described by their sister in "Hours of Lonely Meditation," a series of word-paintings published in 1880, the introduction to which we quote, as a specimen of the author's prose composition:—

HOURS OF LONELY MEDITATION IN THE PICTURE GALLERY OF MEMORY.

There are few of us who do not possess a collection of pictures, unseen by any eyes except our own, certainly not to be viewed at the price of a shilling a peep. On the contrary, some of the pictures are too precious in our sight to be exposed to irreverent criticism; some may be so terrible or so sad that we conceal them carefully by a veil, as the veil was hung over the ghastly figure in the gallery of the Castle of Udolpho. And it is only on rare occasions that the owner of such pictures has the courage to remove the veil and face what is revealed behind, and the terrible memories invoked.

Some of these paintings possess great value in the eyes of the owner; to others their value might not be so apparent. Some are mere daubs with regard to execution, yet precious beyond all appreciable value, because touched by some dear

hand long mouldering in the dust. Some are finished with every touch that love and skill can suggest. A few are left incomplete, with a blotch visible on some portion of the surface, as though the brush had fallen from the trembling hand of the artist.

It is not often that this weird chamber is visited in the garish light of day, and, strange as it may seen, these pictures look brightest and show their varied tints, lights and shadows most distinctly when visited in the silent and melancholy hours of night. It is then that their possessor reaches for the key and unlocks the door, and sometimes with dimmed eyes, sometimes with limbs shaking with grief, or even terror, comes to examine his hidden treasures. So sadly, mournfully interesting are they that he is often unable to quit the spot, and remains there until the first pale streak of morning steals through some chinks in the closed and barred windows, and shines upon his haggard face.

To-night we stand upon the threshold of this gallery of *ours*—only. Who knows but that it may be the last time we shall ever visit it! For the hour is never known to us when we shall be called upon to rise, in the morning light of a day too glorious for earth.

From "*Versus* A WOMAN *Pro* WOMEN."

The lines called "A Farewell to Odsey," supposed to be written "by one passing from the platforms of quiet country life to unknown backwoods in New Zealand," are intended for the parting words of the elder brother—*

Farewell, a long farewell!
For me, when evening's tranquil hours are o'er;
The watchdog's surly bark, the far sheep bell,
Shall wake the echoes of thy woods no more.
I leave thee, sunny as thou art, and fair—
I leave thee to thy calm, unbroken rest;
My step will rouse no more the timid hare,
Nor scare the brooding partridge from its nest.

* See p. 14.

Farewell, a long farewell!
Ere yet a month hath rolled its course away,
Ere many setting suns have lit thy dell
With the deep purple of the parting day,
I shall be far, far absent, and for me
The curlew's note will henceforth sound in vain;
The fox may haunt the wood or grassy lea,
But step of mine will scare it not again.

Farewell, a long farewell!
I shall think of thee when the spring returns,
Recalling oft-times the sweet, tender spell
Of thy rose hedges and thy greenwood ferns;
I shall think of thee when the swallows come,
And when thy fairest flowers are in their prime;
Not *then* shall I forget, forsaken home,
How beautiful thou art in summer time.

Farewell, a long farewell!
Full many a happy hour I owe to thee,
What time the gentle dews of evening fell
On lowly flower-bell or on lofty tree,
And birds were hushed in copsewood and in dingle,
And voices died upon the summer air,
When the deep shades of evening seemed to mingle
And veil the earth for thought, for rest, for prayer.

Farewell, a long farewell!
I shall remember thee, too, when the night
Full heavily hath fallen, and the swell
Of worldly feeling dies, as with the light;
When, poring o'er some wild or thoughtful book
Through brightening starlight, when the flitting bat
Told of the deepening hour, with dreamy look,
Beside mine ivied casement I have sat.

Farewell, a long farewell!
To them and thee, and when again we meet,
What shall have been no prophet can foretell,
Nor how the pulses of our hearts may beat;

It may be when the feeble hand of age
  Hath rung o'er hope's young grave his dreary knell;
Ah me! that future, weird, mysterious page,
  I dare not seek to read—farewell! farewell!

The deaths of her three brothers are recorded in the verses entitled "The Graves of Three Brothers," and the death of a fourth brother, at a much later date, is recorded in the 14th Volume of "In the Watches of the Night," 1886.

As intimated at page 12, the young poetess had her time more than filled in helping her mother in her pressing domestic duties. But every moment that could be stolen — too often from the night — was eagerly occupied in scribbling down the poetry in which her thoughts were ever bursting for expression. No wonder, then, that, thus beset by unfavourable and by depressing conditions of life, her strength broke down; several protracted attacks of hæmoptysis occurred, and she narrowly escaped falling under the stroke of the family tendency to consumption. From this fate she was saved by a sudden gleam of light and hope that broke in upon the gloom of her life.

While they were still at the old Manor House, and before the thunderbolt of the lost Chancery suit had fallen, her second elder sister, considered to be "the beauty of the country around," had become engaged to Sydney Dobell, the poet, while he was almost a boy, and, after a long waiting, they were married, soon after the removal to "Odsey House." In his "Legend of Hellcroft" and several other poems, Sydney Dobell described the scenes of his early courtship.

His brother Horace, who had recently commenced his medical studies, accompanied him to his wedding,

and a remarkable instance of "true love at first sight" occurred between the young student and the young poetess. They met for the first time when the carriage was sent to Royston to meet the London coach, and though very few words were spoken, they have always declared that in their hearts they were bound for life before they reached Odsey House, a drive of about five miles. That the love which dawned on that day never waned is at all events proved by all the incidents of their long and devoted life together.* It was the realisation of the young poetess's dearest dreams, and poem after poem teems with its influence alike in the earlier and the later of her works.

It is not usually wise to pry into young people's love letters. But the first that the young girl received from her—almost boy—lover was *unique*, and, as it struck the *keynote* of their long courtship, and of the love which was ever fresh during fifty-nine years of married life, we need not hesitate to introduce it here. It was in the form of a painting by her lover of an old illuminated manuscript, bordered with wild flowers, and contained the following beautiful poem by Fanny Kemble. It was dated, "London, February 28th, 1846":—

ABSENCE.

What shall I do with all the days and hours
That must be counted ere I see thy face?
How shall I charm the interval, that lowers
Between this time and that sweet time of grace?

Shall I in slumber steep each weary sense,
Weary with longing? Shall I flee away

---

* See the end.

Into past days, and with some fond pretence
Cheat myself to forget the present day?

Shall love for thee lay on my soul the sin
Of casting from me God's great gift of time?
Shall I these mists of memory locked within,
Leave, and forget life's purposes sublime?

Or how, or by what means may I contrive
To bring the hour that brings thee back more near?
How may I teach my drooping hope to live
Until that blessed time, *and thou art here?*

I'll tell thee! For thy dear sake I will lay hold
Of all good aims, and consecrate to thee,
In worthy deeds each moment that is told
While thou, beloved one! art far from me.

For thee I will arouse my thoughts to try
All heavenward flights, all high and holy strains;
For thy dear sake I will walk patiently
Through these long hours, nor call their moments pains.

I will this dreary blank of *absence* make
A noble task time, and will therein strive
To follow excellence, and to o'ertake
More good than I have done since yet I live.

So may this doomed time build up in me
A thousand graces, *which shall thus be thine*;
So may my love and longing hallowed be,
And thy dear thought an influence Divine.

We will now give examples from each end of the story. We find one of the earliest poems addressed to her lover while away at his studies in London—

1st Verse.

I sometimes feel, love, when the moon is out,
And shining down on us with its calm light,

And bats in the grey twilight flit about,
And trees grow shadowy in the deepening night—
As if, in those delicious, solemn hours,
The world were far too glorious to be ours;
As if a thought of bitterness and pain
Could never dwell within my heart again.

* * * * * * *

End of 2nd Verse.

One star is rising now; though dim and pale,
Its light is glimmering faintly o'er our vale;
Dear love! above the roar and the dull sound
That murmurs from thy far-off city dwelling,
How calmly it may shine upon thee, telling
Of that fair home to which we both are bound.

3rd Verse.

Go on in thy bright path, beloved; my heart
Is ever with thee in thy onward way;
So far away from me as now thou art,
Thy spirit seems with me each passing day;
Thou art my guardian angel, and each thought,
Each holy lesson that thy life hath taught,
Is with me in all hours of joy or grief;
And in the evening, when the day grows dim,
And the wind trembles, from flower-leaf to leaf,
When night, with its dark shadows, lies before us,
And the heart turns from worldly thoughts to Him
Whose kind, forgiving eye is ever o'er us;
Thy words seem spoken by each leaf and flower,
Thy spirit breathing in each passing hour.

* * * * * * *

And then, in 1880, about thirty-three years afterwards, she writes, during a serious illness—

LINES TO MY LOVE.

Mine own true love! from the first hour I clasped
Thy firm and gentle hand, the magic touch

Was even as though my future life I grasped—
A life of hope, although I feared it much.

Thou wilt not leave me, if thou dost I die;
Thou can'st not leave me—let the hours pass by,
And count them not for happiness or sorrow,
Remembering only—there is yet to-morrow.

That strange to-morrow—oh! I fear it less
Than earthly days that darken and depress,
Without a silver lining to the cloud,
Or lifting of the head that grief hath bowed.

My heart is full of love—of tender pride,
Although my days are passed not by thy side;
For where thou goest I can rarely go,*
Not mine the power to heal, or soften woe.

I cannot thank thee, oh! thou best beloved,
To me the truest, purest amongst men;
Nor can I paint thee with my heart so moved,
Either by eloquence of lips or pen.

But I will wait for thee life's latest hours,
Age shall not alter me, nor grief's weird powers;
Knowing that from the first bright hour we met,
I lost the right to freedom—to forget.

No human power our hands' true clasp shall sever,
Love, while thou livest I am thine for ever;
Nay! nor in future realms mine eyes can see
A life, a state, that is not passed with thee.

Again, in 1880, the following lines were written during a illness, which she thought might be fatal—

NO, LOVE, I FEAR NOT DEATH.

No, love, I fear not death, yet greatly fear
To leave thee lonely, O! mine own; for this
I dread, since I, of all, to thee am dear,
In kissing me thou givest love's last kiss.

* Referred to his being engaged in practice while she lay ill in bed.

And thou wilt miss me under winter skies,
When blighting snow is lying on the lea,
And thou can'st meet no more mine answering eyes—
Their light is lost upon this earth to thee.

And thou wilt need me in the summer days,
Yes! thou wilt ask for me at eventide;
And looking—nothing, love, will meet thy gaze,
And feeling—nothing, love, is at thy side.

Ah! love, not long may'st thou be desolate,
Thy faithful heart shall in its season soar
Into the realms where I shall ever wait
To rest upon thy heart for evermore.

It must be God's own time, beloved, we know;
Yes, dearest, it may not be over-long
Ere thou wilt leave thy weary life below,
Called by the sound of heaven's celestial song.

And still later, 1886—

To ——.

Yes, as thou lovest me, so, dear, do I
Love thee with all my soul, with all my heart;
Have I not told thee I should surely die
If thou and I were on this earth to part?

O! *for thee*—could it save thee from sore pain,
And could it help thee—gladly would I give
All that I have on earth; and yet again,
How joyfully for thee would also live!

Thou hast been dearer than all words have told;
More perfect love was thine, from early years,
Than any I had dreamt that earth could hold—
Both in the hours of joy and hours of tears.

Love! in the years I pray may yet be thine,
Whatever storms break o'er life's later days,
I pray that on thy placid brow may shine
A light, the fairest known to earthly ways.

The light that shines around a saintly head,
The light that on few earthly paths is shed,
The light that in thy steady eyes doth burn,
That light from heaven that shall to heaven return.

Again, at a later date, she writes—

I could not praise thee, O! thou best one, more
Than now I praise thee for thy love and grace;
Though thou wert dear in all the years before,
Thy later love fills yet a broader space.

Again, see "Living to Help." "In the Watches of the Night," Vol. xiv.

Again, 1886, "One Brave and True"—

The strong and simple ways of life *he* trod,
Were neither of the Pharisee, nor hind;
So that he walked the ways approved of God,
He cared not for the plaudits of his kind.

A calm and ever a straightforward man,
He slandered no one's home and no one's hearth;
He held in scorn a yet too common plan,
To win by pushing others from our path.

The envious slandered him at honour's gate,
Sought, vainly, vilely, to disturb his rest,
Pursued him with a mean, vindictive hate—
He went his way, God's peace within his breast.

This love, which events proved to have been so true, was hotly opposed by the student's mother when it came to her knowledge. Between her father's family and that of the father of the poetess there had been a religious feud, and she had not yet forgiven her eldest son (Sydney Dobell, the poet, who married Mrs. H.

Dobell's elder sister) for marrying the girl for whom he took a "boyish fancy" on a chance meeting at the house of his mother's father (Mr. Samuel Thompson), some years before the feud began; and the idea of a second son taking a wife from the same source she could not endure, and she put in the way of the attachment every opposition she could.

But a much greater difficulty than this threatened the young people's peace, and was made the most of by their opponents. The student had chosen his own profession, and had thrown himself into its pursuit with the most ambitious devotion. In it were bound up all his future hopes and prospects, from which he knew no turning back. The young poetess had no knowledge of the medical profession in its highest walks and scientific aspects; such acquaintance as she had had with doctors had been with unfavourable specimens, whom she had chanced to meet in the cottages of her father's villagers, or in the illnesses and deathbeds at home. She had conceived a strong aversion to the idea of a doctor's life, and had not concealed from her friends a determination *never to marry a medical man.* This dark cloud of difficulty was the subject of many controversies and vain appeals from each side. Each was obdurate. Yet, still, hoping for some solution of the difficulty, their love went on, and for a time the subject had been dropped as too dangerous for further discussion.

Suddenly the cloud lifted and was dismissed for ever by a romantic incident. During one of the student's vacations the lovers met at a house amongst the Gloucestershire hills, temporarily occupied by Sydney Dobell and his wife, the sister of the poetess. They had ridden out together to sketch a village church.

Tying up their ponies to the gate and selecting a special view of the church, they sat down upon a mound to sketch it, when their eyes fell upon a tablet on the church wall, recording the deaths of seven brothers and sisters from consumption, the complaint from which so many of the poetess's near relations had died; and, having fresh in her mind the failure of all medical aid in the case of her recently lost brother, she was overcome with emotion, and expressing her horror at this blight upon families, gave vent to her feeling of the uselessness of doctors and the emptiness of their professed powers.

Upon this the student asked: "What if *he* should devote his life to discovering a cure for this scourge?" No more was said until after a long pause, and when the emotion had subsided she exclaimed, "Yes; I would idolise the man who could so dignify a doctor's life. Let us work together to solve the problem; never again will I object to a profession that can be devoted to such noble objects."

The promise was kept. She embraced the new idea with characteristic devotion, and soon after the student's return to his studies in London she sent him two poems, first, "The Student's Garret," evidently inspired by a dread lest he should be induced by her lately uttered words to work himself to death. Thus she says—

* * * * * * *

Yet still, as midnight passed away,
And starlight faded from the sky,
The student by his lonely ray,
Sat reading, with unwearied eye;

And the calm moon seemed looking down
With a half wondering, pitying glance,

Through the soft locks of palest brown
That framed that thoughtful countenance.

Alas! though hope and strength might now
Shine on that young, determined brow,
Its spirit yet may be o'ercast,
The avenging shadow fall at last.

Years since that brilliant moonlight night had flown,
And daylight's last and melancholy smile,
Through casement frames of grey and crumbling stone,
Lit a cathedral's dim and solemn aisle.

* * * * * * *

The wind was whistling with a dreary sound—
And through the vaults of death and cloister damp,
It came and went, unfelt, unwept by all,
Even where, wrapt in heavy, sable pall,
Lay the young student of the midnight lamp.

The second poem, "The Good Physician," was to tell how completely she had realised her own conception of the physician's life, and entered into her lover's highest ambitions. We quote some disjointed passages:

An aged man sat musing on the past,
  Recalling patiently each recollection,
Upon whose pale and furrowed brow was cast
  The shade of many cares and much reflection.

* * * * * * *

Musing, he sat, recalling as a dream
  The image of a young, aspiring boy,
Pacing the streets at morn's most early gleam,
  With footsteps light and bright eyes full of joy;
It might be with that vision in his heart
  Of future years, our childhood only knows
With which too oft in later life we part,
  And think of as a phantom at its close.

More than a dream, in truth, of brilliant fame,
Of high renown, glowed in that ardent mind,
All youth's proud hopes of love, of wealth, of name,
Were his; but even then, with these combined,
Were nobler aspirations, strong, and yet
Growing more daily strong, as he began
To comprehend the task before him set:
To comfort and to heal his fellow-man.

That energetic figure bent at length,
That boy's rich hair was scattered now and grey.

* * * * * * *

He did a lone and narrow room recall,
A single lamp that half illumined it;
A table like that room, confined and small,
Whereby a student oft was wont to sit,
And where, with books and papers round him piled,
He used to study, with a mind untired,
Until the star of morn upon him smiled,
Or in its socket his dim light expired.

No useless learning that which he pursued,
No idle lore engaged his leisure then;
No wild, ambitious hopes his mind amused,
Untouched by him the poet's glowing pen;
Or, if aught visionary could allure
That meditative brow from sober thought,
No *selfish* dream at least was his—*that cure*
For maladies deemed fatal might be wrought.

Then, as he pondered, there arose again,
Remembrance of that student's later life;
He saw him bending o'er the couch of pain,
He saw him where disease and death were rife,
Applying all the powers that he possessed
To rescue from a sad, or early, grave,
His fellow-creatures—or to give them rest
And passing comfort, if he could not save.

O! he, the just and the upright, who can
  Look back thus on his active life and feel
He has dealt rightly by his fellow-man,
  And if he failed, yet ever sought to heal—
How must his heart such recollections cheer,
  Gilding the very pathway to the tomb!
To him the thoughts of death can bring no fear,
  And age, though premature, can bring no gloom.

* * * * * * *

That day in the country churchyard was never forgotten, and its influence is indelibly marked upon the work of the physician's life.

When they married (July 5th, 1849) they set to work at once at their long-wished-for task; every leisure hour was devoted to it, the young wife acting as amanuensis, her husband working at his investigations, and handing to her passages of works for quotation, notes to copy, references to hunt up, and so forth. With the same objects in view, Dr. Dobell accepted, in 1859, the post of Physician to the Royal Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, which afterwards acquired a world-wide fame as the field of those investigations and experiments which led to his introducing to the profession, in 1863, the use of pre-pancreatised foods in the treatment of consumption and other wasting diseases, by which a complete revolution was effected in the feeding of the sick. (See his Paper to the Royal Society, 1867.)

In the introduction to his celebrated work, published in 1866,* he refers to these early works in the following words: "The greater part of my leisure during the last sixteen years has been devoted to the study of

* "On Tuberculosis: its Nature, Causes, and Treatment."

pulmonary consumption and other forms of tuberculosis, and to collecting, assorting, comparing and testing the facts recorded by others directly or indirectly connected with the subject. The ideas which led to this plan of work were set forth in a paper which I read before the Abernethean Society of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, while I was a student there in 1848."

At this work husband and wife used to sit up late after the business of the day was over, and thus continued those habits of *night study* which each had formed before marriage, and which the poetess thus refers to, in the preface to her latest work. "In the Watches of the Night was chosen as the title of these poems because nearly all of them were written between the hours of ten and two at night." *

The two long poems, "Ethelstone" and "Eveline" (which gave the title to a collection published by Kegan Paul & Co. in 1881) were written in the first few years after marriage, during the hours of this night study with her husband, in the intervals when he did not happen to have any work in which her hands could help. These two poems were printed, *for private circulation*, soon after they were written. Several reasons decided the young people not to *publish* them. One reason undoubtedly was that it might be annoying to Sydney Dobell, who was then publishing his poems, to have another poet of the same name, although not of the same blood, publishing at the same time. The most potent reason, however, was a fear on the part of the young people that the quiet, studious and domestic life to which they had determined to devote themselves might

* Up to 1888 Dr. Dobell devoted some portion of almost every day (or rather night) to the further prosecution of these studies. See his work on Bacillary Consumption, 1888.

be disturbed by entering the "literary circle." The poems were, therefore, only given to a few private friends, and were never *published* until thirty years after they were written.

The portrait (Plate II.) is copied from a pencil sketch taken by her husband, May, 1851, and the words scribbled across the background are the first two lines of the following poem, then just composed, and which was afterwards embodied in the collection referred to on page 29.*

DREAMS.

Dreams! how they haunt the brain,
With fantasies as beautiful as vain;
The long-lost dead arise,
To gaze upon us with forgotten eyes,
Until we start from sleep
To find them fading into air—and weep.

Forms that for years have lain
In marble rest, in undisturbed repose,
Return to us again
With recollections of life's darker woes;
Bringing the bitter tears
That wept the sorrows of departed years.

Eyes that the icy hand
Of death hath long since closed, unseal again,
And from a far-off land
The absent come—a pale and silent train—
Whose mild yet tender gaze
Recalls the fervid love of youth's fond days.

The heart's most secret grief
That finds but in forgetfulness relief,

* "Ethelstone, Eveline, and other Poems," by Mrs. Horace Dobell. Kegan Paul & Co., 1881.

Nor there can find it long;
The heart's most cruel grief, most biting wrong—
Aye! all we may have learned
Of sorrow, to the mind is thus returned.

Yet sad it were if all
We loved should pass for evermore away;
Shrouded beneath the pall,
Whose sombre folds conceal their dark decay;
'Twere better that once more
They thus should visit those they loved before.

Ah! bitter though it is
When in those mystic dreams some gentle tone
Recalls a faded bliss,
To waken from our joy and find it gone:
It would be greater pain
To know it ne'er could be recalled again.

So come, ye shadows pale,
From the dim region where may be your rest;
Not with despairing wail,
Or sad hands clasped upon each shadowy breast;
Rather with memories of a happier time,
When youth was bright, and sorrow seemed a crime.

September 7th, 1850, fourteen months after their marriage, a daughter was born. This was a source of extreme delight; for the young poetess, while ardently desiring to become a mother, had suffered many qualms lest she might be disappointed, as no children had yet been born of the two previous marriages in the family. With characteristic resolve she now determined to leave off composing and give herself up to the care of her family, and to helping her husband in his arduous labours, and in economising their pecuniary means, which at this time were very small indeed, for the family

Chancery suit, to which we have referred, had deprived the girl of most of her expected dowry, and the young doctor had nothing but what his brains could earn; for some years, therefore, they were much pinched to keep up the necessary appearances. But better times came sooner than could at first have been expected, for her husband's zeal and never-ceasing hard work brought him early fame, and with it, in due time, came a better income.

The following extracts from a letter to her husband's mother, dated February 17th, 1851, gives a pretty picture of the young mother at home, when her little one was five months old:—

MY DEAR MRS. DOBELL,

. . . . Little Mary is *so* round and plump—she is like a little partridge. Then she has such a beautiful little mouth, and is always crowing, blowing and bubbling with it, and her little button of a nose turns up more than ever! She understands play, too, and *shouts* with delight if you cover up her face and play "bo-peep" with her. But her favourite time for a game is by the nursery fire, when she is quite undressed at night—she jumps about like a parched pea, she is so pleased; and we generally laugh outright, both of us, for she always laughs to see me or Horace laugh. I always make her untie her own shoes at night. She turns the toes up to her face, pulls at the strings until they are untied, and then tugs at the toes of her socks until they come off. But she has her serious moments, too, like other people, when she lies on the hearthrug with one finger hooked in her mouth, watching everything that I do; and she always seems to enjoy, with a good deal of serious dignity, a ride round the room in an armchair, which her papa sometimes gives her on his return home in the evening. She does not sleep very well at night, and sometimes it is hard work to get up in the morning, after having been disturbed at night, but she won't sleep after six, when she insists on coming into our bed, and kicks me with

her little feet, pulls my hair, and *shouts* at me until I consent to get up. . . .

The article I spoke of in the "Magazine" was in favour of the country, and, of course, I did not find fault with it on that account, for I love the country very much indeed, but it seemed to me to take a wrong view of town life in general, therefore I replied to it. . . . Baby's love and a kiss. With love as usual,

Affectionately yours,

E. M. DOBELL.

Extract from another letter to her mother-in-law, showing her bravery, June 12th, 1852:—

About an hour after Sidney Dobell left on last Monday I went to bed, leaving Horace up, when there was a tremendous outcry in the streets, and presently both the housebells were violently rung, the knocker was almost hammered off, and two policemen's rattles sprung. I thought there was a murder in the street, and sprang up in great alarm, but on opening my door I *found the passage in flames.* I could not tell but that the top of the house was on fire, as the people called out from the street, seeing the flames from the window. So I caught up little Mary (one year and ten months old) and down I rushed through the flames. Horace instantly gave orders that none of the rabble should be admitted, and ran upstairs, and quickly extinguished the fire. The mob were so pleased with his promptitude that they cheered him. Very little damage was done. The servant had carelessly left a candle on the window-sill, and it had caught the blind and communicated the fire to the woodwork; so, shining through the windows, it looked terrific. The street was completely blocked up by two fire-engines, two escapes, and a crowd of neighbours and passers-by. . . . Little Mary clung tight to me through all the uproar, too frightened or too confident in mamma's care to cry."

Other children came in due course, and the young wife was more than fully occupied with her home duties.

Although by this time all threatenings of consumption had passed away, her health was far from strong, and like so many persons of highly nervous and sensitive temperaments, she was a martyr to migraine and other neuralgias. The slightest over-fatigue or extra excitement, whether pleasurable or not, had its inevitable penalty in a violent attack of headache, attended with sleeplessness and sickness, which greatly complicated the discharge of her now numerous duties.

Poetry was put aside in a marvellous way, considering how completely it had absorbed the interest of her life up to this time. It was only allowed a place when the impulse became irresistible, and even then the compositions were unseen for years by any one except her husband. It was thus that during many of the most active years of her London life, while, as we have seen (page 7), she was distinguished for her lovely voice and musical talents, the majority of her friends hardly knew that she could write. For the reasons we have mentioned at page 29, she purposely kept them in this ignorance.*

In 1865 (aged 37, Plate I., frontispiece) her youngest child had scarlet fever, while staying at a country cottage for change of air, and her mother nursed her night and day, not fearing contagion because she had had the fever in early life, and had previously nursed her other children with the same

* Programme of educational work with the children, found in an old desk—date anterior to 1864. Monday—Nine till half-past all arithmetic; Violet plays till ten; Horatia writes; Horatia reads and Violet writes till half-past; Violet reads till eleven; quarter hour to self, half hour learn music by rote; Mary one hour painting or learning poetry; half hour read history to self; eleven to twelve music. Ditto, Wednesdays and Fridays, except needlework instead of painting for Mary on Friday. Tuesday—Horatia reads; Violet to self, Mary ditto, history to half-past nine; French till half-past ten; Violet plays till eleven; Horatia writes; Mary, geography; Violet and Horatia, geography till half-past eleven; Violet reads to self till twelve; Mary, music till twelve. Ditto, Thursdays and Saturdays.

disease without catching it. But, shut up in the close quarters of the cottage, she became direly poisoned, and had a long, complicated and lingering illness, from which she with difficulty recovered, much shattered in nerves and in general health. It was during this watchful nursing of her "little one" in the cottage, that the following lines were written, called

A SAD LULLABY.

Sleep, little one, for I am ever near,
Both in the night and in the hours of day;
Sleep, precious one, who art to us so dear;
Thy parents o'er thee watch and ever pray
That strength and joy, ere long, again may shine
Out of those sweet and tender eyes of thine.

Sleep, little one, around thee lightly fall
The soft, pink curtains, flushing thy pale cheek;
Sleep, precious one, so prized and loved by all,
Although, alas! so wasted and so weak;
Pray God a better time is nearing now,
To bring back health to that fair childish brow.

Sleep, little one, the fevered hour is past;
Fresh violets now are ready for thy hand;
Thy days of darkness, dear, are gone at last,
Thy good physician hath a magic wand!
And yet again may run those little feet,
Where sunlight glows, where flowers are fresh and sweet.

It was not till 1870 that she had sufficiently recovered from the effects of this illness to return to her home duties, and to take part in the marriage of her eldest daughter, then 19. After an engagement, which had been a source of much anxiety to their parents, the newly married pair appeared to be delight-

fully settled in a pretty place within easy reach of London. Unfortunately this promised peace did not last long, and within two years the young husband, discouraged by some discoveries relating to the prospects of the firm in which he had become a partner, and dazzled by the accounts then reaching England of the "diamond discoveries" in South Africa, threw up his partnership, parted with his house, and joined in the first "rush to the fields."

The shock and sorrow of thus unexpectedly parting with her eldest daughter under such unpromising aspects, brought to a climax the already damaged state of her nervous system, by which many of the best years of her life were nearly blotted out. Awaking one morning from a troubled sleep, she was found to have completely lost her memory—that memory which had before been of extraordinary brightness. This was followed by a complete collapse of physical power, threatenings of spinal paralysis, paroxysms of frightful cramps, and neuralgia, first in one part of the body, then in another; horrible dreams and night terrors, loss of power to take food, and consequent emaciation. For long and weary years it seemed as though there was no hope; partial recoveries took place under different forms of treatment, but not to last; memory did not return, and her lovely singing voice had gone.

Through these sad years she was devotedly nursed by her two remaining daughters (Violet and Horatia), to whose incessant and angel-like watching she, again and again, owed the maintenance of life during those recurrences of collapse, when nutriment could only be got down by spoonfuls under the persuasion of her husband or her children. Skilled nurse after nurse was

tried in vain—her children by day and her husband by night were the only nurses who could succeed.*

This long period of eclipse in her life was rendered additionally distressing by its coinciding with the flood-tide of her husband's fame and work, with the growing into womanhood of her two younger daughters, and with those years of her own life which are generally considered the prime.

"Society," to some extent, was obliged to be kept up, for the sake of the girls, and as the intervals of comparative improvement in her condition became more satisfactory, she managed to help by her presence. Both the girls became engaged but would not hear of marriage until their mother should be well enough to be left. It was her most earnest wish to see her sweet nurses happily settled at the earliest possible time, and a more than usually protracted and promising rally being taken advantage of, her "darling Violet" was married in 1875 to Dr. Charles Meymott Tidy; leaving

* The following extract from one of many letters written to his mother by her husband, June, 1871, will give an idea of the terrible nature of these illnesses;—

84, Harley Street. June, 1871.

"There can now be no doubt (as I have feared all along) that we have to deal with a serious disease of the spinal nerves, and that only the blessing of heaven upon our remedies and upon the efforts of nature can save the patient from general paralysis, even when liberated from the agonies of the present stage. . . . This is the fourth Sunday since my poor wife has not left her bed, except with the greatest difficulty, to have it made. The whole of that time she has been in a distressed dream, and even yet does not recognise the fact that she is in London and with me (she had been at their country house till the very day she was taken ill) except now and then for a few minutes. In her own mind she lives in a nest of snakes and scorpions, for ever striving to devour her. My prayer that this cup of misery may be taken from her and from me remains as yet unheard! . . . I live on hope, and still hope all may be well. . . . I do not tell our two girls (who take turns in nursing) all my fears, lest they should be too distressed to do their nursing cheerfully.

"With regard to a nurse you will be glad to know that we have one in the house whom I selected from our hospital. But the nurse is of little use at present, except by working behind the scenes, my poor wife not having seen her before the delirium set in does not understand her presence; . . . the sight of her excites terrible delusions of poisoners, robbers, and so forth, unless Violet or Horatia are present too.

"It is most unfortunate that I am at my very busiest in practice, so that I hardly know how to get along. Almost every evening I get telegraphed out of town as soo as I come home from my round. Tuesday I was in seven cabs, four railway trains and two private carriages before my day's work was done, and then began my night nursing."

her younger sister Horatia to continue the duties at home. By the kind consideration of Dr. Tidy, it was arranged that Violet should live close by her mother, and this became a great comfort to both. Memory was now showing glimpses of recovery, and strength was sufficiently restored to enable the mother to enter keenly into the enjoyment of seeing her child's domestic joy in a house of her own. And in 1876 the arrival of a little granddaughter, and in 1877 of a little grandson, were subjects of mutual delight and interest. Meanwhile, Horatia, the youngest girl, had married, and was happily settled in London, but rather out of the way of frequent intercourse with her parents. Still the wrench of their leaving home was softened.

Their elder sister was still abroad, for, after a disastrous failure at the diamond fields, her husband had gone with her and their little son to New Zealand, to cultivate a neglected estate belonging to his father's family.

During the many lingering hours of partial convalescence, while strength and memory were unequal to much reading, Mrs. Dobell was supplied with all the arrears of pictures illustrating the events that had occurred during her long period of oblivion; and as it became known to her friends that the amusement of examining and arranging these had proved a success, many hundredweights of pictures poured in from various sources at home and abroad.

She was so much impressed with the value that these pictures were to her that she determined to give the same pleasure and advantage to the poor patients in hospitals. With characteristic zeal, energy and perseverance, that showed how her health was at last

coming back, she worked at cutting out, sorting and mounting this huge mass of pictures. These she had bound into scrap-books, and after supplying her grandchildren and many special friends, she was able to present several large volumes of selected scraps to most of the London hospitals, and to the chief hospitals and convalescent institutions in the provinces, each volume having the following words written on its title page: "Many years of suffering have taught me how often *pictures* may beguile the weary hours of illness and convalescence. And the hope that hospital patients may feel as I have done has made it a delightful work to arrange these scraps for their use.—84, Harley Street, 1879." The numerous grateful acknowledgments from the patients and their attendants amply proved to her how well her hours of convalescence had been spent.

Her husband, always her chief physician, had suggested these pictures as a first step towards the restoration of memory; and this was followed up by his inducing her again to take up her pen, that had for so many years been laid aside, and to begin by writing out some reminiscences in prose, if she did not yet feel equal to verse. This led, little by little to the production of a small book, published anonymously under the title, "Life behind her Screens."

The last words of the preface to this little work, dated 1879, tell of the impending sorrow which was then approaching, more certainly than the mother was allowed to know: "The idea of printing these stories first originated in the hope that they might amuse and lighten the sick leisure of a dearly beloved daughter" (Violet).

The book opens with a sketch called "Our Village," to which we have referred at page 6, as describing

some scenes around her old home in Hertfordshire, and many of the other stories refer to the same neighbourhood, as for example, "The Old Grange and its Eccentric Inhabitants," "Another Instance of Mysterious Death," "Willis the Poacher," "The House of a Thousand Years." These reminiscences were varied by "A Few Words Concerning Governesses: with some Remarks on Female Education"; "The Collapse of a Feeble Nature," etc., etc., and the book finishes with "Impromptu lines on hearing of the hopeless illness of Constantia," a favourite cousin, who in girlhood had lived in the nearest country house to the poetess's home, and had married her second brother, Mr. Herbert Fordham. It is dated August 12th, 1879:—

They tell me thou art dying, while the sound is on the breeze,
Of the hum of many beetles, of the wild birds in the trees;
While those that watch beside thee with heartbroken murmurs pray
That the hand of the Destroyer yet a Greater Hand shall stay.

Oh, thou friend of many seasons; oh, thou faithful friend of years,
I cannot hear thy fate without a rush of bitter tears;
The calm walks of our girlhood are returning to my mind,
When spring's bright gladness faded, or the summer's sun declined.

When we strolled beneath our fir trees, with soft moss beneath our feet,
And the smell of early roses and of new-made hay was sweet,
And when you wandered onwards with a closer friend than I;
Ah! those days of early friendships whose dear memory cannot die.

Companion, wife and mother, all in one brave heart combined,
Few had thy powers of soothing, or thy gentleness of mind,

No word of careless mockery *our* friendship ever marred,
Thy sympathy was gentle, even reproof was never hard.

In illness you remembered me with all a sister's kindness,
And my faults you treated leniently, with more than sister's blindness;
We, who may follow, well may wish so pure a close as thine
To life's long, weary pilgrimage—'tis *we* who must repine;
While we tread the arduous path that thou so patiently hast trod,
And remain below to mourn thee, thou wilt be at peace with God.

Attached to these lines is a note from her brother: "Thank you for sending the beautiful lines. . . . I shall often read them with sad thoughts of the past. . . . Connie read them and says, 'Pray be comforted on my account. I have much to comfort me in seeing every one so full of love. I am quite resigned to wait God's will, and hope He may comfort those who are left.' Your and your husband's sympathy have been one of my greatest pleasures in life.'" It was to visit this old friend on her deathbed that she made the first long journey after her illness, and the above lines indicate the first return to poetical composition.

But the first passionate burst of the old fire was excited by circumstances referred to in many subsequent verses. Just at this period of her convalescence she suddenly and most unfortunately discovered that a lady friend in whom she had placed absolute confidence, and who had been with her in one of the worst phases of her illness, when all her thoughts and words were the mere *wanderings of delirium*,* had allowed herself to repeat some of these baseless mutterings, which she had heard while

* See p. 37.

sitting by the sick bed, and had thereby set up a gossip derogatory to the pure and spotless character of her friend. In the first rush of indignant surprise she wrote "An Impromptu Address to Calumny," and about the same time "A Boundless Empire, or 'La Calomnie' the Mighty Empress."

IMPROMPTU ADDRESS TO CALUMNY.

O Calumny! thou cruel and poisonous snake,
That crawls from filthy swamp or nettled brake;
O Calumny! upon whose hateful trail,
The fruit falls rotted and the flowers grow pale.

None can escape thy snares—the meanest, least,
Who crawl life's thoroughfares; the holiest priest
Who prays within his cell secure, alone;
Nor even a monarch on the proudest throne.

None can escape thee! not the noblest fame,
The humblest footsteps, or the loftiest name;
And heads revered must meet thy dastard blow,
Nor brow escape that shall be pure as snow.

The mother, bending o'er her dying son,
The knight, whose laurels had been hardly won,
The maiden and her lover—even the child,
Thy foul and falsest slanders have defiled.

Who hath not known thee? Who, however pure,
From thy degrading shadow is secure?
Who hath not been with noble anger stirred,
When first thy vile and loathsome voice be heard?

Insidious, crawling viper! on thy track
There is no marching forwards, nor yet back;
More wary than the fox, and far more vile,
For Reynard snarls, but Slander wears a smile.

Thou meanest worm! who would compassion feel
When placing on thy head his hardest heel?
None than thyself more shameless words have spoken,
None than thyself more sinless hearts have broken.

There is no spot where poverty is sure,
No hearth where truth and honour are secure,
No home where Calumny hath not its berth;
Heaven is exempt, but never man, on earth!

A Boundless Empire; or, La Calomnie, The Mighty Empress.

I have been a mighty traveller, I have seen unnumbered lands,
And my swift, unwearied glance has swept the wildest desert sands;
I have scaled the loftiest heights by human vision ever seen,
And through the darkest valleys have my curious footsteps been.

I have been a mighty traveller, I have breathed Sahara's air,
I have strayed through densest forests, where the homes were few but fair;
And when I saw a casement that seemed far too bright and clean,
I have breathed upon it heavily, then passed away unseen.

I have been a mighty traveller, and my steps were full of joy,
When with Paris and frail Helen I was gay in ancient Troy;
To Telemachus alone, I ever failed to deal a blow,
While Minerva was beside him to protect the boy from woe.

I have dwelt within the palace, I have lingered in the cot,
There is no sacred refuge or retreat that knows *me* not!
I have whispered words of misery to the happy and the young,
I have wakened ghastly music when the harpstrings were unstrung.

No one can ever conquer me, my power is over all,
And even the mightiest empires I have shaken to their fall;
Nay, often have I held in bond the proudest heart and hand,
For even death itself obeys *my* whisper or command.

If the path thy foes are treading seems to thee too fair and
bright,
If there is glowing brilliancy where thou would'st have it night,
Invoke me in the sunshine or invoke me in the shade,
I am ever near, and solemnly I promise thee my aid.

November, 1880.

The versatility of the poet's powers were shown by several comic lyrics referring to the same subject, of which we give the following, called

MORE HAPPY THOUGHTS.

Old ladies like their scandal, and old ladies like their tea,
But which is it they like the best, I think I hear you say,
O! Scandal, by a hundred times, or so it seems to me,
For that they can have served to them at all times in the day.

O! Scandal is delightful, for it makes the hours pass by
Without a break upon the way, so rapidly they fly;
It soothes and comforts one so much, wherever one may be,
To think our friends so foolish—that so much more wise are we.

O! Scandal is delightful, the most tasty of all food,
For it makes one feel so comfortable, O! *so* wise and good,
For *we* don't do as others do—are not such fools as they,
And can we say a wiser thing, or one more pleasant, pray?

Yes, tea comes in the morning or the evening of the day,
But Scandal ever fills the mighty goblet on the tray;
Our tea we swallow down but in small cupfuls at a time,
But Scandal is served up to us in bumpers, when it's prime!

With the few exceptions, of which we have given specimens, very little poetry was written at present, the chief occupations being the making of scrap-books for the grandchildren and for the hospitals, and reading up the books which had been missed during her illness.

She had known something of Dinah Muloch in the early part of her career, and much admired "John Halifax." She therefore seized upon "Young Mrs. Jardine," the last book by the same author, in expectation of a literary treat. Instead of which it filled her with indignation at the insults that she felt it cast on women; especially was she incensed by the general indictment that women are "*feeble, useless, half-educated; taught to believe that ignorance is amusing and helplessness attractive!*" and that "the man who has will to choose, courage to win, and faithfulness to keep is almost unknown to modern chivalry; *as rare, alas! as the woman who deserves to be adored.*"

It is a striking illustration of the generous impulses of the poet's nature that, deeply as she had been, so recently, disgusted by the calumnies of her former confidential friend, they had not in the least had the effect—which they would certainly have had upon a narrower mind—of embittering her against women in general; on the contrary, they had only served to illumine by contrast, the devoted faithfulness, the patient and untiring love with which her daughters had watched over her illness, and the truthfulness and high-mindedness which she had seen in other women. Stirred by these recollections, she could not rest till she had refuted the charges contained in "Young Mrs. Jardine," and with a rapidity that surprised her friends she wrote and published the work entitled "*Versus* a Woman, *Pro* Women," bearing on its title page the words, "Justice, Justice, Justice" *(Measure for Measure)*, and the following dedicatory lines:—

Woman! from whom his first lisped prayer he learns,
To whom in all his early griefs he turns,

In whose fond arms, upon whose faithful breast,
His cares are soothed, his troubles laid at rest;
Who smiles with him in joy, grieves in his woes,
And save when shared with him, no pleasure knows;
Heaven has ordained her his one constant love,
Both here on earth and in the world above.

We quote here the following striking passages from Chapter II., as a specimen of the author's trenchant style and of the force with which she stated her case for the defence:—

"And, sure now, and is it against women that ye spake so evil?" an Irishman might ask in genuine astonishment, had he heard that women are "feeble" and "useless." "Is it not my Biddy, the ould woman, that hoes the praties, *washes* the pigs, and *feeds* me?"

Who is it that governs England and her great dependencies, larger and more troublesome to rule, sometimes, than England herself? Who is it that—assisted formerly by her noble-hearted husband, who knew well how to value a woman—looked carefully, thoughtfully, wisely into all the multitudinous affairs of State?*

A Woman.

Who is it that assists and counsels the Prime Minister—whose work is only second, in anxiety to that of the head of the Kingdom—in the privacy of his own chamber?†

A Woman.

Who is it that, in the country, hoes the wet turnip and mangel-wurzel fields, assists in hedging and ditching, sometimes in winnowing corn and feeding cattle?‡

A Woman.

Who is it that, in manufacturing towns, sorts the dusty rags and papers, and assists in the various health-destroying mills?

A Woman.

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* See "Life of the Prince Consort." † See "Life of Lord Palmerston."

‡ Again and again have we seen them so employed in the rural counties of Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire.

Who is it that does so much of the heavy work of keeping clean and in order our manufactories and offices?

A Woman.

Who was it that superintended the ghastly hospitals at Scutari during the Crimean War?

A Woman.

Who was it that, some years ago, wrote one of the best novels of the season, called "John Halifax"?

A Woman.

Who is it that is trusted to transmit some of the most important life and death messages of the telegraphic wire, in which office everything depends upon care and exactitude?

A Woman.

We pity our authoress that no friend from the outer world ever visited her at her Hermitage and induced her to abandon it for a little while, some few years ago, to accompany that friend on a visit of inspection of that marvellous work of a woman's brush—Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair." A woman has here competed with a man, the very king of his subject, on his own battleground, and, by the verdict of the whole artistic world, we believe we may say, has been declared victor! Sir Edwin Landseer's horses, fine as his undoubtedly were in his better days, were yet surpassed by her—it was pronounced—although by her alone.

At the Royal Academy Exhibition our authoress might have seen that wonderfully pathetic picture, "The Remnants of an Army," also painted by a woman; not to speak of the charming works of Mrs. Ward, Miss Paterson, Miss Edwards and other lady artists.

It is pleasant to remember that the ancients decided that the arts were best symbolised by women. . . . (page 25).

And, again, page 27:—

We might, indeed, ask her: . . . . Have there been no Sommervilles, no De Staëls, no Siddons, no Keans, no Ristoris, no Malibrans, no Grisis, no Jenny Linds, no Garrett Andersons, even in recent times? Have we, again, no authoresses of sterling worth?

Of course, the work produced a great sensation, and was bitterly attacked by the literary friends of the authoress of "Young Mrs. Jardine,"* both in the public prints and in private letters; one over-zealous friend being foolish enough to offer to pay for the whole edition if its author would "immediately withdraw it from circulation." Others tried to quash it by representing it as a spiteful, personal attack. But it was not to be so put down; the true character of the book, its absolute freedom from any personal or narrow-minded feelings, and its noble defence of women by a woman, were justly and repeatedly recognised by independent reviewers, as seen in the following quotations:—

Opinions of the Press.

Just now, when the subject of women is occupying so much attention, the present work by Mrs. Horace Dobell has an interest irrespective of its merits. Foremost among the subjects discussed by Mrs. Dobell is that of the false estimate of women, and the part they play, taken by a woman herself—the authoress of "Young Mrs. Jardine." The facts brought forward and the arguments Mrs. Dobell has employed certainly tend to prove . . . . that the authoress of "Young Mrs. Jardine" takes an altogether one-sided view of her own sex. . . . There is nothing more foolish than to condemn a whole class . . . . and Mrs. Dobell's vigorous protest will, no doubt, emancipate not a few minds from the thraldom of its prejudiced misconceptions. . . .

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* The virulent spite of some of the reviews of "Versus a Woman" were easily accounted for by the fact that Miss Muloch (Mrs. Craik) had become connected by marriage with the prosperous publishing house of Macmillan, who, naturally, set all their "dogs of war" upon the authoress who had dared to attack so important a member of their party. This was well known to the authoress, and explains many of her stinging references to unfair critics. She had the example of Pope's "Dunciad," and Byron's English Bards and Scotch reviewers for thus cutting up her literary enemies. But its worldly wisdom may be questioned, for reviewers, like other mortals, are apt to "hit back," and as they fight protected by batteries the contest is unfair.

As an example of Mrs. Dobell's style we will quote a passage, in which she lays bare the falsity of the assertion that women are "feeble, useless, half-educated, taught to believe that ignorance is amusing and helplessness attractive." She says:—

"History has shown that a woman's natural nobility of nature has sometimes shone forth so brilliantly from the obscurity in which it is frequently veiled, that it could not be ignored, either by ignorance or envy. Not all the restrictions that man or circumstances had placed before them could always prevent women, when occasion required it, from coming gloriously to the front, to the rescue or assistance of others. This has happened from the time of the Bible to the present age—from the time of the courageous love of the mother of Moses, the filial affection of Ruth for Naomi, the noble, heroic devotion of Esther to oppressed and trampled-upon people, down to these 'latter days,' of which we have already spoken!"

A woman who stands up for her own noble sex against one-sided libellers deserves to be heard. Mrs.. Dobell's work is interesting, as challenging unsound views of life.—*Court Circular*, November 13th, 1880.

This is a breezy, vigorous and impetuous attack on women who run down their own sex. The writer takes up the glove thrown down by the detractors, and battles strenuously "*pro* women," selecting as her antagonist the authoress of "Young Mrs. Jardine." . . . Mrs. Dobell dares her to mortal combat, and well does she handle her lance. It is refreshing to listen to the crisp, trenchant criticism . . . . and the book deserves to be an immense favourite with womankind at large. She is as generous to the men as to the women, and shows . . . . that there is a preponderance of good over evil even in characters that are far from faultless. . . . We have a series of shorter essays, besides "Tea Table Talk" musings, memories and criticisms . . . . all of which are boldly treated, affording as much pleasure as surprise to the reader.—*British Mail*, November 2nd, 1880.

The essayist's object is to controvert something that has been said to the disparagement of women by one of their own sex, the authoress of "Young Mrs. Jardine," who, in a spirit of

censoriousness, has asserted that "women are feeble, useless, and half-educated, and taught to believe that ignorance is amusing and helplessness attractive." . . . Of course, we should be, as the author's title has it, "*versus*" the woman who has said it.—*Daily News*, November 2nd, 1880.

One of the most curious books that the reader is likely to find.—*Morning Advertiser.*

One of the very oddest, if not the wisest essays we have ever read.—*Saturday Review.*

"*Versus* a Woman, *Pro* Women" is designed as a defence of women. It abounds in criticisms of the writings of lady novelists . . . . and there is an amount of originality about them that will afford amusement.—*Daily Chronicle.*

The chief part of this pungently written volume is taken up with a defence of women, and to some extent of the sterner sex. . . . Mrs. Dobell finds in the recent novel, entitled "Young Mrs. Jardine," by the authoress of "John Halifax," the following passages: "The man who has will to choose, courage to win, and faithfulness to keep, is almost unknown to modern chivalry; as rare, alas! as the woman who deserves to be so adored," and "Women are feeble, useless, half-educated; taught to believe that ignorance is amusing and helplessness attractive." It can hardly be wondered that a woman should be found to gird on her pen against such libels. . . . Mrs. Dobell is quite justified in much that she says against the pessimist views of women so often taken by the authoress in question, and women generally will thank her for her vigorous defence of her sex, while the array she brings forward of women who have distinguished themselves of late in both public and private life is in itself sufficient to show that the sex can claim the possession of the highest virtues and excellences of humanity. . . . The authoress of "Young Mrs. Jardine" has laid herself open to many of the severe strictures Mrs. Dobell has inflicted on her. . . . The miscellaneous articles, such as those on "Kleptomania," "False Judgments," "Novels," and "Servantgallism," are of a very [illegible]adable character; that on "Servantgallism" is especially to

be commended, as touching on one of the great domestic grievances of modern life.—*Standard*, October 20th.

Following the chief essay, this volume also contained: "A Man's Thoughts about Men," "On Kleptomania," "On False Judgments and Impressions," "Evening Gossip about Novels," "Some Remarks about Servant-galism," "The Complaint from below Stairs," and "The Complaint from the Master in his Study" (in comic verse), "Concerning Solitude," "Tea-Table Talk," "Musings, Memories and Criticisms," and "Hours of Lonely Meditation in the Picture Gallery of Memory," from which we have already quoted some specimens of graphic word-painting, at page 15.

After the publication of "*Versus* a Woman, *Pro* Women" Mrs. Dobell wrote the following squib in the *dialect of her native village*, which is too cleverly comic and good-naturedly satirical not to be quoted before leaving the subject:—

THE WAY WE LIVE NOW.

With apologies to Mrs. Trollope.

(*Supposed to be contributed by one Hodges, a Hertfordshire boörn!*

"A duke will ride in a second-class railway carriage, and a duchess come down to breakfast in a linsey gown."

The Proclamation of a Modern Novelist.

I hits Stodges maäny hard blows,
For un desarves um, that I knows;
But if Stodges hits back agin,
I sez, sez I, 'tis a shaäme and a zin!
For that Missus Raikes (Craik) *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez so!

For who bees Stodges?—a *h*ignorant vool,
He doän't goo to charch and he doänt goo to school ;
He ain't got no larning, nor courage nuther,
And t' Missus's more hignorant nor the t'other!
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez so!

For Stodges—he b'longs to the good old times,
When folly and hignorance wurn't no crimes—
He doän't write no letters, and t'books never reads
But he drives t' oold plough and he zoes t' tare zeeds.
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

The hoame that he's gotten he caän't maäntain,
And his wife's rare zilly, voolish and vain—
He caän't e'en gie un a round good blow—
She thinks ut rare clevvur nothun' to know.
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

And his chillun wull grow up arl the zääme,
Folly and zilliness *their* pooty gääme—
What not to dew, mon, and what not to zay,
'Tis all that they duz, mon, the whole live day!
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

Noa! they dunno what in t' warld to doo—
Nar they dunno where in t' warld to goo—
And they zits or they stroöls droo th' vields all day,
Sometoimes o' this un—then that un way!
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

When *they've* gotten money, oh! doän't they dress vine!
Nuthin' to remind un o' pigsties and swine—
And in grand old halls goo merrily around,
All to pianny or to viddle's merry zound.
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

And doän't they live also on nice food nuther!
Venison and jellies—one a patch on t'other—
There's nuthin' too vine for their stomachs, I'm thinkin',
And nuthin too prime for their throats for drinkin.
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

And when un's in town, too, 'tis rare good vun
To loäke at t' shops and the things in un;
And buy the vine dresses, mon, that you zees there,
'Tis better, least, than gooing, mon, *you* knows where!
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

And evun in travellun' if the zeats be haärd,
There's the laäst penny nooz, or the laäst c'rect caärd;
And if um's squeezged close, why, it doän't much matter,
For um all wears "linsey" and it caän't get flatter!
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

For this is what duchesses wear, I'm told,
So it caän't hurt in crushing, if I may maäke bold;
And they ought'n much t' care, for it ain't much cost,
And it doän't much show, when it's crumpled and crossed.
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

Since our Missus' grey dresses be all made t' hum,
There ain't no bills vor at Christmas to cum;
There woän't be no ribbons nor fal-lals to pay vor,
And there woän't be no hoops, hurrah! to make way vor.
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true mon, if *she* sez zo!

'Tis a werry good toime for the pigs and the asses,
'Tis a rare good toime for the crowds and the masses,
With not no "linsey gowns," but all velvet and silk 'uns,
Oh! a rare good toime for the real Charley Dylke uns!
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo!

For zum they be fat uns and zum they be thin,
And zum they sticks out and zum they caves in ;
Zum looks loike our baäcon and zum poplar trees,
And they doän't care for purtyness, that I zees !
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo !

Duz *hurn* ride in zecond-class, or third-class mebbe,
And thinks that's the way she proves she's a ledde—
And calls for a barrer that drives un on ends,
When she gooes down to ——sheer to zee t' oold friends !
For that Missus Raikes, *she* sez ut, you know,
And it mun be true, mon, if *she* sez zo !

Dew they *arl* go bumping in they zecond classes—
These vine young loärds and their vine young lasses ?
Duz they wear no zatin and other vine dodges,
Then—*if that be their vineness—why—I'd raythur be Hodges !*

The author had reason to believe, when her subsequent works were published, that certain malicious attacks *made upon her personally*, rather than upon her works—attacks which appeared under the garb of "reviews"—emanated from the same hands as the similar attacks made upon her in reference to "*Versus* a Woman, *Pro* Women." This perversion and degradation of what she considered to be the true and honourable function of the "reviewer" induced her to write many lashing satires on "False Critics," and "Mock Critics," which further excited the ire of those at whom they were aimed.* But while satirising and ridiculing the "pretenders," the author has taken much pains to express her high appreciation of the value of true and impartial criticism of

* See Note, p. 48.

literary work, as distinguished from carping personal remarks about the authors themselves. The following may be given as a fair example of this:—

THE SPURIOUS CRITICS.

(A Supposed Fable of Gay's.)

Good sirs, when next you vent your spite,
See your sarcasm is more bright;
Go home and polish up your wit,
It needs some polish, all admit.
Your words have not the accents even
Of truth, that first pure gift of heaven;
You spoil even what you think you're praising.
Sure, "Oireland" boasted your "upraising,"
Or backwoods in the "Coloneese,"
But scarce Old England, if you please!
We scorn the meagreness, the air
Of want of candour we see there,
Perchance ye bless some other shore,
Ye Critics, *England's own no more!*
O Critics of a day gone by,
Of searching wit, of fearless eye,
Ghosts of Macaulay, Croker, Hume,
To wear your cloak some still assume,
But are as like the ancient clan
As apes, who dare assume the man;
'Tis but a passing phrase, we trust,
Cowards there may be—will be—*must!*
Bright are the critic-rays, but rare,
And pass like meteors through the air;
And those that oft assume the place,
Are poor *pretenders* in the race—
Are such a mockery of the letter,
The sooner they are gone the better.

October, 1880.

CRITICS AND QUACKS.

(A Mistake.)

"Her aims are lofty . . . when not engaged in hoisting what she considers a malignant reviewer on his own petard."

The West Bromwich Free Press, May 8th, 1886.

Friend, let thine accusation even be met
At once; *never* "real" critic do I "hoist
On his own petard"—simply 'tis a "set"
Who do themselves upon the public foist
As "true reviewers," yet are simply those
Who, safe in hiding, merely are mean foes.

'Tis liars and slanderers whom I treat with scorn,
But these, good friends, never *reviewers* are;
If I the veil have from some features torn,
If I some false, *pretentious* brows would tar
With the tar-brush of ignominy—still,
'Tis not "reviewers" who have done me ill,
But those who, meanly masked, before us come,
Pretending that they beat an honest drum.

Aye! I dare look to ye, my friends, for *praise*,
In that I do expose the *quacks*, who tread
With so much impudence the critics' ways,
Enraged at every true word of them said.

To what a multitude
Of kindly critics do we not owe much
Of pleasure;
. . Gladly we own
. . . . the spirit sweet,
The thoughtful brain and the reflective mind,
That in *our many critics* we do find.

ABOUT AN OLD TRUMPET—BLOWN AGAIN—IF FEEBLY.

There was a cry that once did sternly come
To many dwellers on earth's older land—
"*'Tis best to leave* untouched the Church of Rome,
Insult her neither by the lip, nor hand."

Again, a cry that echoed from the throne,
Whereon one saw a tyrant, evil-browed—
"'Tis best to leave our rulers, here, alone,"
A cry that angered and yet stilled the crowd.

And let Corruption stalk beneath the sky,
Bearing with her what spoils her hand hath clutched;
And loud from crowded cities comes the cry—
"Leave, all of ye, our *Bumbledom* untouched."

Yes, still in countless places do we hear
That cry, if heard in many a varied tone;
That cry of meanness, vanity, and *fear*,
That cry, for all: "Leave *Criticism* alone!"

Leave Criticism alone (another form
Of ancient threats), or fear the coming storm;
To *seek* but to amend shall work thee ill,
And, therefore, victims of abuse, *be still!*

Mrs. Dobell was next persuaded by her physician (her husband) to go over the manuscripts of her poems which from her childhood upwards had been stored away, and to select such as she liked for publication. This resulted in the preparation of an octavo volume, published by Kegan Paul & Co., in the early part of 1881, which is thus described in the preface:—

"These poems were written under many vicissitudes, some only the other day, some in years gone by; some in a solitary room in an old Manor House, some in the green lanes of Hertfordshire and Surrey, some in the wide cornfields of Cambridgeshire, some by the seashore, and some, in the happiest of all places to the author, in a London library, by London lamp-light, surrounded by the roar of London life, and with the sweet companionship of a sympathetic fellow-worker.

"84, Harley Street, December, 1880."

The title of this work was taken from the two first poems, written soon after her marriage, under the circumstances referred to at page 29, and includes some poems written as early as the age of ten, and also some composed while it was preparing for the press, but although it comprised 303 octavo pages, it represented but a minute portion of the rolls of manuscripts filled with the compositions of the poet's early life, from some of which we have already quoted.

The reception which these poems received may to some extent be gleaned from the following extracts from the notices of the Press.

It is easy to recognise in these very varied poems, some of which are graceful narratives, others spirited appeals, and others thoughtful reflections, the evidences of a refined and varied mental life. The verses abound in facile melody. . . . A body of refined and graceful poetry.—*Academy.*

The first thing that strikes the reader is the freedom from all whimsicality of manner. "Eveline" is a story of village life touchingly told. The interest of the narrative depends chiefly upon Mrs. Dobell's manner as a *raconteur.* There are many poems in the volume, all distinguished by high taste and sentiment.—*Overland Mail.*

Fresh, spirited, graceful . . . . evince a gifted and deeply affectionate nature . . . . sometimes interspersed with no little humour.—*Liverpool Albion.*

Wonderfully sweet, and written in scholarly fashion . . . . contain quaint flashes of humour. . . . There is a remarkable purity of tone. "The Fisherman" (lines for music) has the genuine ring about it which Gounod and Sullivan love so well. —*Gentleman's Magazine.*

But we must also give a few quotations from "Ethel-[redacted]*tone*" *and from* "Eveline."

ETHELSTONE.

(Canto II.)

Far, in the calmest hour
Of night, the clear, shrill piping of a bird,
Resounding from some wreck of Roman power,
Oft on the high surrounding hills is heard;
For o'er the fallen warrior's buried crest,
It builds its lonely, unmolested nest.

The statue from its niche
Hath been dragged down and trampled in the dust;
The brazen image, and the palace, rich
With carving, left to rapine and to rust;
These, and the rifled tomb and grass-grown fane,
Are all that now of Roman pomp remain.

Rome, when her blood-stained hand
The flag of death and victory unfurled
Above the fair homes of some ravished land,
Looked, spoke and felt, the Conqueress of the World!
The wreath of laurel binds no more her brow—
Proud Empress, say, where are thy triumphs now?

Tread reverently—thy tread,
O wanderer, is on her mighty dead;
Yon wild flowers, with their bells of beauty, hide
The monument defaced, the column's pride.
Men raised them there to tell a tale to us,
Nor dreamed posterity would read it thus.

O mortal! if a boast
Of human greatness e'er thy lip defiles,
Remember Rome, her nation's conquered host,
Her noble cities, heaped in ruined piles;
So learn humility—for here below,
No wiser lesson human hearts may know.

ETHELSTONE.

(Canto IV.)

Fair hour of eve! by angels given
To soothe the careworn sons of earth,
When sunset leaves its glowing heaven
To orbs of an inferior birth,
And Labour, looking to the west,
Sees that the wished-for hour has come,
And, faint and weary, seeks the rest
Found sweetest in a peasant's home.
Thou purest balm to those that grieve
O'er human weaknesses and crimes,
Whose beauty woos the world to leave
Its busy thoughts for fitter times.
How often, at thy tranquil hour
We feel the past arise again,
So vividly as to o'erpower
Each colder purpose of the brain,
And seem to live once more in days,
The brightest that we may have known,
Made brighter by the magic rays
That Memory throws around her own!

* * * * * * *

Far in the loveliness of a fair land,
I buried the free soul, that once was stirred
By feelings that can find no utterance here;
So let it rest—forgotten, midst the flowers.
But thou, who art a man, yet shaming not
To weep the tears a woman can despise—
Degenerate son of earth, why slumber thus,
Forgetful of the mission of thy youth?

From "Eveline" we may quote Eveline's letter, Canto II.:—

Once more I write to thee, alas! once more
I pray for pity vainly asked before;
My heart is weary of its violence,
I now am calm and even resigned, and hence

I trace these lines, that in my altered mood
Their words may touch thee and be understood.
Thine image is beside me still, and nought
  Can drive it hence, though bright and pure no more;
Yet I will own to thee that I have thought
  I judged too kindly of thy heart before.
It was not well of thee to leave me thus,
  Nor by my shame and frightful anguish moved;
O! that the cold grave had divided us,
  And not thy colder heart, my still beloved.
And yet I write not to reproach, nay, I
Have often thought it sweeter far to die
Than live to loathe thy memory and thy name;
'Tis I, not thou, that have been most to blame.
But, abject in my misery, I implore
  That thou wilt write to me one little line,
One word of gentleness; I ask no more,
  'Twere useless to demand what once was mine—
Thy heart's fond love; I know that this is lost;
  I, that once deemed it of myself a part—
Ah! words can never tell thee what it cost
  To tear that fond delusion from my heart.

* * * * * * *

Eveline's Prayer.

I thank Thee, O my God,
  That Thou hast breathed upon my heart again,
And turned away the reckless steps that trod
  The downward path, from whence return is vain.

It was but now I prayed
  That Thou would'st end my sorrow and my sin;
Despair my heart so wild and hardened made,
  I dreaded life, and saw no hope therein.

My head was bowed with shame,
  I dared not lift from earth my heavy eyes,
I even feared to call upon Thy name,
  Lest Thou Thy guilty suppliant should despise.

O pity and forgive
The heart that knew Thee not except through fear,
And hear the voice that now implores to live,
That it may yet perform its mission here.

My Father, if Thou wilt,
Chastise me heavily—Thy will be done.
But, ah! let not my error and my guilt
Fall on the fair head of my little one.

I ask Thee but for this,
Not selfishly before Thee now I kneel,
Imploring not my faded youth, or bliss,
Or praying Thee my broken heart to heal.

No, but with burning tears
And supplicating hands entreating Thee,
That I may guard my infant's future years,
And save her from the fate that mine must be.

My God! my God! I hear
Thy awful voice from the vast heavens reply;
It falls like thunder on my mortal ear—
Thou dost refuse my prayer—then let me die!

Thou say'st I am unfit—
Dishonoured, stained and lost—for such a task;
I know Thee wise, yet can I not submit,
'Tis mercy and not justice that I ask.

Eveline's Song to Her Infant.

Lullaby, lullaby,
Dear one, rest;
Pillow thy head on my yearning breast,
For never, oh! never, shall sleep like this
Revisit thine eyes in after years;
The fond, warm touch of thy mother's kiss
Will have changed, on thy tender cheek, to tears.

Lullaby, lullaby,
Soft and deep
Falleth the shade of thy infant sleep,
Like a veil that a summer evening throws
On the tranquil brow of the parting day;
So deepens the calm of thy pure repose,
Till the light of thy face hath passed away.

Lullaby, lullaby,
Ne'er below
Shall thy mother again such slumber know,
Or the holiness of a peace like thine,
Return to her worn and weary brain;
Thy dreams are the dreams of Eden—mine
Are now but the echoes of waking pain.

Lullaby, lullaby,
Yet no more
From the mercy of Heaven my lips implore,
Than to guard from thy sweet young life the blight
On the guilty brow of thy mother cast;
'Tis the prayer that I breathe by day, by night,
'Tis the prayer that in death will be fondest—last!

At page 26 we have quoted from a poem written when the young poetess was 17, to show the ideas she had then received from her student lover as to the proper sphere of the "Good Physician's" ambitions, and we may well quote here a poem written in 1880, after thirty-five years' experience of the physician's actual life, to show how far these early aspirations had been realised:—

TO DR. ——.

They listen for his footsteps on the stairs,
To them distinct through all the city's hum,
Hushing their painful sighs, heartbroken prayers,
To count those footfalls as they nearer come.

And sadly, as he bends above the bed,
They wait for words of comfort from his lips;
Death shuts the fatal wings so darkly spread,
And life smiles out behind her black eclipse.

His soothing hand relieves the racking pain,
Wipes the cold death-damp from the haggard face,
Brings hope and peace to the o'er-troubled brain,
And stays pale Death in his too rapid pace.

No wonder that they bless him as he leaves
The darkened bedroom and its fevered air,
The saddened brow, the bitter heart that grieves,
Are happier, better, for his presence there.

Ever serene and calm himself, he goes,
Heedless of place and time, where duty calls;
Be it to soothe the mightiest monarch's woes,
Or suffering penury in prison walls.

He, too, has suffered, though his brow is calm,
Grief, sickness, pain, are not to him unknown;
But he, from whom so many seek their balm,
Seeks from on High the solace for his own.

"ETHELSTONE AND EVELINE," ETC.,
page 142.

These thoughts were felt to describe so well the "Good Physician" in his daily life that they were copied into the *British Medical Journal*.

In encouraging his wife to undertake these literary labours, her physician had a double object, first, as we have said, to assist in bringing back the lost memory by a sort of mental gymnastics, and gradually to awaken the old interest in human affairs, so vivid before her illness. But a still more anxious object was to divert the awakening mind and feelings from the "dread of some dark day unknown to thee," which *he alone knew* that the future held for mother and

child, and the shock of which he feared might again unhinge the only partially recovered nervous system of his patient.

After the birth of her second child, Violet, who, before her marriage to Dr. Tidy, had been her mother's chief and devoted nurse and companion (see page 36) during her long illness, and her father's chief and confidential comforter throughout those years of anxiety and sorrow, did not recover her usual health, and the terrible discovery was made by her father that she was beginning to develop an insidious, but incurable, internal disease. The real truth of its hopelessness was sedulously concealed, as long as possible, from both mother and child, in order that they might be the better able to sustain each other's cheerfulness through the long and painful illness which was seen to be inevitable, knowing well that the heart-breaking truth must reveal itself only too soon by the steady decline of strength and the increase of suffering. Through more than three years of deepening anxiety and sorrow the mother endeavoured by her devoted love to return that of her child. To bring her hope, and pleasure when hope was vain, to earn the love of her two little children, in preparation for the dreaded day, were the never-ceasing occupations of the mother's thoughts, while, with angelic self-control, the poor girl always kept her worst sufferings from her mother, never losing sight of the fear lest sorrow might bring back her mother's illness.

About 1880 were written the lines headed "The Mother and Her Three Daughters," which refer first to her eldest daughter's first voyage to New Zealand, then to the second's commencing illness, and lastly to the third's happy home:—

THE MOTHER AND HER THREE DAUGHTERS.

O'er the dark waters of the stormy bay,
With straining eyes, and pallid, parting lips,
She sees the fluttering pennants fade away
Of one of Albion's noble, home-built ships.

She sees, with sad, prophetic eyes, the flash
Of lightning, as it gilds the crowded deck,
She hears the deafening thunder, the fierce dash
Of seething waters through the groaning wreck.

Trembling she turns away her inward gaze
From all sad *visions* of her far-off child,
And seeks near home for calmer, brighter days,
For hopes more peaceful and for skies less wild.

There bends a face that she can ne'er forget,
Pure as the snowdrop, sweet as "Violet,"
Whose ear lists ever to another's moan,
Forgetful of all echoes of her own.

A brow of pallor, oft of bitter pain,
Yet one whose heart is in another's woes,
With lips that bless, or praise, but ne'er complain,
With angel footsteps through the world she goes.

Another by an English hearth I see,
A face all glowing with a mother's joy,
Watching the pretty gambols on her knee,
The rippling laughter of her noble boy.

She hath, as yet, a calm, untroubled lot,
Untouched by stern despair, unstained by tears;
And yet we dare not, on earth's changeful spot,
Foretell the sunshine of our unborn years.

Scan not with sad, nor with prophetic eyes
The dawn of an anticipated day;
Ah! seek not to predict life's future skies,
But, calmly, still look forward, hope and pray.

But the first *expressed* recognition of the approaching great sorrow may be traced in the following lines. They were written on arriving late one lovely evening at Bournemouth, on a flying visit with her husband, in search of a house and grounds to which she tried to hope they might *yet take their poor child for change;* or, failing this, to which that child's little son and daughter might be carried, to keep their thoughts from the gloom at home. She was charmed with the place, and the circumstances brought back memories of similar visits in days gone by in search of change for her own little ones after illness, as evinced by the following lines:—

BY THE WHITE CLIFFS.

O! little hands and little feet,
I see them through the blinding tears,
O! little voices, soft and sweet,
I hear them through the roll of years.
The tiny white and trembling hands
That tell of sickness and of pain;
Filled with the treasures of the sands—
How memory brings them back again!

I see them wandering, side by side,
Those treasured loves of early days,
They come again at eventide,
With all their pretty, childish ways;
And sweet it is awhile to dwell
Apart from life's too busy hum,
Wrapt in the sad and tender spell
Of sorrows past, of joys to come.

Thou pine-girt place—how calm thou art;
The moon that shimmers through thy trees
Seems of thy woods a very part,
When parted by the wild sea-breeze;

Not even the boatman's carol rude
Thy sleeping echoes bear along—
Thou art the very solitude
For lovers' sighs and poet's song.

White cliffs that breast the ocean wave,
Fringed with dark shades of birch and pine,
Bright stars that light the pirate's cave,
And through their gloomy branches shine;
Flag of the yacht, or idler's sail
That gently flaps the dying gale,
Across the darkness ye return,
Like visions—mournful, but not stern.

Away! for busy life is near,
Whose constant murmur thrills mine ear;
It is the world—the world of strife—
It is the voice of eager life.
Give not to grief, to vain regret,
The moments that are granted yet;
There still is work that may be done,
There still are victories to be won.

Bournemouth, September, 1880.

In the same month was written—

TREASURED MEMORIES.

O ye past days, so anxious yet so dear,
Full of a countless list of tender stories,
With shifting lights of hope, of joy, of fear,
I would not change ye for a world of glories.

Our little ones—across the chequered past
I see their tiny figures gaily flit,
Fair human memories that the longest last,
Gay with the pretty laugh of childish wit.

I care but little what the dull world seems,
It costs no pang its trivial ties to sever,
So that mine early loves come back in dreams—
Bright, sunlit joys that will be joys for ever.

No envy, with its sharp, envenomed stings,
  No hateful spite can this sweet past destroy,
For memory hath a world of gracious things
  The vilest tongue is powerless to destroy.

They cannot hush the gentle, tender voices,
  With all their merry laughter—infant cries;
There is no human spell my heart rejoices,
  Like the sweet spell of childhood's mystic eyes.

There may lie grander treasure at our feet,
  And wealth or glory be within our call;
And friends may flatter, flattery is sweet!
  But one dear, childish lisp outweighs them all.

One childish lisp—*Mamma;* no angel tone
  Can thrill the heart as that one tone can thrill,
That little word—that one—is all mine own,
  Its first soft accents are remembered still.

And oh! I pity with a thousand pities
  Those who in such sweet music have no part;
Not for the treasures of Ind's fabled cities,
  Would I yield up these treasures of my heart.

September 12th, 1880.

Late in 1880 we have "Lines to ——," which show that in her inmost thoughts, though never on her lips, the coming end of the life of her darling child was recognised:—

Far more of heaven than earth, my own, shines in thy calm and placid eyes,
Though thou hast yet the warmest love for all our earthly loves and ties,
And yet there is a look, resigned, even in the hours of bitterest pain,
And few a peace so pure as thine can ever in this world attain.

Thy gentleness, thy calm submission, more of heavenly grace
have taught
Than all the wisest sermons teach, or all by sore experience
brought;
The peace of heaven is in thine eyes, so beautifully soft and
clear,
And even the accents of thy voice seem almost heavenly to
mine ear.

God is with thee, my darling, I can read it on thy gentle brow,
O! if I ever trusted Heaven, I know my trust is in Him now.

Thy pure and sinless life hath been a noble lesson to us all,
Let those who think their footsteps firm take wiser heed for
fear they fall,
For they may boast their sinless lives, yet there are few can
live as thou,
While racking pain thy frame disturbs, ***but not the patience
on thy brow.***

The truth of the mother's words was confirmed by Canon Gregory, who was a frequent and most gratefully appreciated visitor to the invalid throughout her illness. She did not conceal from him that she differed from many of his views, and they often discussed their differences. In a letter referring to these interviews, after her death, he said, "*Every visit to her was a beautiful lesson.*"

Still straining for a ray of hope, and seeking to cheer her child, in May, 1881, the mother sent her the following lines:—

God is with thee, my darling; thou art brave,
With all the bravery of a noble breast;
The God who takes away, the God who gave,
Is One on Whom thy trust will ever rest.

God is with thee, my darling, we will still
Look forward to a calmer, happier day,

When yet shall pass from thee this load of ill;
For this at morn, at noon, at night we pray.

To hear that thou hast rested, smiled, or slept,
Is still our constant thought, by night, by day;
All other troubles, once so sadly wept,
Are lost in this one thought, or passed away.

O, let no trouble thy pure breast disturb,
There yet may dawn bright days of calm and peace;
I, too, all tumult of my heart will curb,
And bid my restless mourning thoughts to cease.

A visit about this time to a former residence called forth the following, "Loved Memories":—

'Twas here that her small footsteps used to stray,
In the first coolness of an autumn day,
To gather damask roses, whose sweet heads
Hung, in the cold winds, on their frosted beds.

And here, where snows of winter lay so deep,
Her hand of pity scattered crumbs, to keep
The birds of summer through the wintry days,
Till April's sun should rise, with warmer rays.

Here was her little garden, here she grew
Hepaticas of pink, or tender blue,
And lilies of the tallest—always white,
Auriculas and Bethlehem "stars of night."

Ah! little garden, I no more can tread
Thy moss-grown paths, on which the roses shed
Their pallid leaves, as summer days depart;
So fare thee well—thy memories wring my heart.

But hope was vain. "That dark day," which had been so long foreshadowed with a silent dread, at last was realised. Many poems written in the next few

years are its chronicles, from which we can only find space for two or three extracts:—

THE WORLD'S LOSS.

(A heart-broken cry. In Memoriam.*)

The world hath lost a saint—
A light hath passed from earth, and sky and sea;
And, looking upward, dizzy, sick and faint,
We marvel why so cruel a loss should be.

We spare her ill;
To us there is none other, on this earth,
A place so rarely sanctified to fill,
To bless, as she hath blessed it, from her birth.

O God! the task is hard,
To read Thy kindness in so stern a blow;
Love's tender flesh full bitterly is scarred;
The marks remain for ever here below.

Beloved and wept by all,
Purest and best of all the earth's sweet flowers;
Ah me! the Hand seems cruel that could recall
A joy that we had looked upon as ours.

Only—Thou knowest best;
She may be happier in that world of Thine,
Where all are with eternal freedom blessed,
Loosed from the bonds of which we here repine.

But yet—we have so few
Like her, to brighten up this world of pain;
And life is a dull moor, or desert view,
Where we may search for her, and search in vain.

The world is bleak and drear,
The bravest even shudder and despond;
The bright go home and leave us weeping here—
Ah! well for us there is a world beyond.

---

* See Vol. vii. of "In the Watches of the Night."

Hope is the only cheer,
The only brightness in this gloomy sky;
And oft, to us, the hour most fair, most dear,
Is that, when weary, we lie down to die.

HOLY PATIENCE.*

So earth hath lost an angel! Thou hast passed
Into the realms of everlasting peace;
Thy bitter foe hath lost all power at last,
The throes of unrelenting pain now cease.

A lesson full of reverence hast thou taught,
By thy sweet calm, thy patience deep and wide;
But, ah! a lesson with such anguish fraught,
Would I, ere I had learned it thus, had died!

Thus patient wert thou from thy earliest years,
Through all the hours of pain thy life hath run;
Grief hath been thine, but never selfish tears,
The world can spare thee ill, thou gentle one.

Yes, patience such as thine is rare below,
Nor often sanctifies our human race;
And few thus meekly bear the cross of woe,
That marked, alas! how early, thy sweet face.

O! one like thee we shall not meet again,
With eyes so soft and gentle in their pleading,
And grateful, in the very midst of pain,
For the sad cares thy suffering state was needing.

So perfect in thy womanhood—so calm,
Thy mind replete with full and noble thought;
And something sweet, and as the very balm
Of holiness, thy presence ever brought.

All things by Heaven created had to thee
An ever-deepening interest, all thine own,
Even to the habits of the bird and bee;
And thou could'st read a "sermon in a stone."†

---

* See Vol. vii. of "In the Watches of the Night."

† V. showed an especial aptitude for and interest in the study of geology.

And all things Heaven had sent upon this earth
Some portion of their lives to thee could give,
Some interest in their progress, in their worth,
The wherefore they should die, the wherefore live.

Yet hast thou left us! gentle, loving, wise,
By all who knew thee mourned for and beloved;
Thou hast forsaken us for holier skies,
Wept for on earth, and by thy God approved!

Beloved and Lost.

She lived upon the borderland of saints,
The land that is so circumscribed on earth,
The land that mortal pencil feebly paints,
Where selfish thoughts and cravings have no birth.

Her voice was tender as the soft west wind,
Touching each early bud with loving touch;
Though wisdom with compassion was combined,
Her large heart felt for all, aye, felt too much.

Her eyes were blue, with twilight's softest blue,
For o'er the brightness was a pensive shade;
Her gentle heart knew—more than others knew—
How sorrow should be met and pain allayed.

Returned to Heaven.

Thou wert my favourite, and none thought it wrong,
For thou wert loved of all, thou heart of gold;
Thou wert so merciful, withal so strong,
All saw thee calm, none ever called thee *cold*.

Thou wert so mindful of all others' woes,
In all times so considerate in thy ways;
Ah, so unselfish! and yet not of those
Who air their charities for others' praise.

Yes, so forgiving, with no mock pretence
Of figuring as a saint, for which some strain,

And always full of such calm, wholesome sense,
In nothing ever selfish, careless, vain.

Gentle and sweet, yet with a lofty brain
That comprehended much and was too deep,
Too wise, too broadly thoughtful to be vain;
One whose sweet memory love must ever weep.

Ah! wherefore did'st thou leave us, save that earth
Was scarce a dwelling for a soul so sweet;
Too pure, too holy, from its earliest birth,
To walk, o'er long, this world of weary feet.

It had long been arranged that when the dreaded day came the two little children, Zoë and Harry, should be taken over to 84, Harley Street at once, before they knew their loss. Thither also, at nightfall, in the first paroxysm of his grief, their father rushed for consolation, and for more than a year *there* they all stayed.

To try to fill the dreadful chasm that had been reft in their young lives, and in that of their father, now occupied all the time and thoughts of the poetess. To her was allotted the sad task of telling the little ones that they were motherless, and when the fitting opportunity occurred they were told "she was too sweet and good to be allowed to suffer any longer, and the angels have taken her to their homes in the skies, where they will make her well and happy, and there she will watch over you till you are old enough to go to her."

From time to time, during the next year, they were taken to the new home that Dr. Dobell had been forming at Bournemouth; then back to Harley Street, for not yet had their father dared to live again in his own beautiful house in Mandeville Place, filled with the treasures collected to give pleasure to the lost one, but

now peopled only by memories of the last three years of suffering and deepening sorrow.

At last the move was obliged to be made, and under the devoted care of Miss Cowdery, who skilfully and tenderly nursed their mother through the worst part of her illness, and who, at her request, had remained to take charge of the children until they should be old enough to go to school, they returned with their father to Mandeville Place, and *Dr. and Mrs. Dobell left London for ever.* This was afterwards referred to in a professional journal in these words: "Dr. Dobell, who had attained a position in the foremost rank of London consulting physicians, suddenly left the Metropolis and took up his residence at Bournemouth, in consequence of a great domestic bereavement, which had rendered the associations of London society unbearable to his wife and himself." Or, as Dr. Dobell said in his work on the "Medical Aspects of Bournemouth" (Second Edition, 1881): "We fled to our Bournemouth home to spend the rest of our lives amidst new thoughts, new scenes and new spheres of work. The calm and beauty of the neighbourhood were so delightful that when summer came we felt no inducement to go to any other place for a holiday."

The sad tale of their bereavement is briefly told on a monumental tablet beneath a fresco emblematical of the Christian virtues, which decorates the sacrarium of the beautiful church of St. Peter's, Bournemouth: "Given by Dr. and Mrs. Horace Dobell in loving memory of their second daughter, Violet Fordham, wife of Dr. Charles Meymott Tidy, who died in London, July 29th, 1881, after a protracted and painful illness, *borne with angelic* patience in Christian faith."

At Bournemouth everything was done to give delight to the young children on their visits. There were their little gardens, tended for them in their absence by the authoress; there were their pet pigeons, their guineapigs, their squirrels, their dolls' houses, their toy cupboards, their games for out of doors or in, their picture books, their special rooms. Here in summer were their gipsy teas in the woods; here in winter they were amused by the endless collections of stories which their grandmamma could always invent, or recollect. From girlhood she had been a special pet with children, for whom she could find never-failing sources of amusement out of her own brains. Nursery rhymes were written in their absence, in readiness for those coveted days "when the children were coming." These rhymes, of which we quote a few, were afterwards published as the eighteenth volume of "In the Watches of the Night."

MANY VOICES.

Our dogs and foxes bark, for they don't know how to speak;
The little robins sing, but the mice can only squeak;
The tiny flies in summer buzz—the bigger beetles hum,
While fishes, whether small or large, as *all declare*, are dumb.

The gentle cow will moo, while the bull delights to bellow,
For he is loud of voice, you know, and *such* a restless fellow;
The larks are fond of singing in the beautiful blue sky,
While the corncrake in the barley hath a strange and mournful cry.

You hear the piggies in the farmyard make a horrid *squeal*,
That frequently reminds one of the grating of a wheel;
The cat, when not engaged in hunting, hath a pretty purr,
Unless you chance to stroke her skin the wrong way of its fur.

The mischief-loving magpies are very fond of chatter,
Especially when something to alarm them is the matter,
When, if you look about you, it is likely you will see
That cruel thief, the cat, is slily creeping up the tree!

Our donkeys startle by their bray, the baa-lambs loudly bleat,
Though all are very silent when they have enough to eat;
The bird will sing its sweetest note when sitting by its nest,
And of all the sounds I speak of here, I think that *quite* the best!

Although the little motherless children always had the first place, plenty of room was found in the heart and home for any of the little ones now springing up in the London home of the youngest daughter. To the elder of these the following lines were written:—

* * * * * * *

O Philip, gentle as thou art,
And full of pretty, childish ways,
Who can foretell what brilliant part
Thy wits may play in future days?

For me—my hopes are bright and high
Of what may be in life's estate,
Although I dare not prophesy,
I yet *believe* thy future great.

At least *this* prophecy is mine—
Whate'er may try thy youthful heart,
Yet, in the days that may be thine,
Thou wilt but play a noble part.

That never grief, or shame's sad tears
Shall cloud the sunshine of thy years,
But noble deeds and noble worth
Shall make thy glorious crown on earth.

And the following are from lines to the eldest son of the daughter, then in New Zealand, who was born at 84, Harley Street:—

TO RONALD.

My Ronald—fearless little boy,
Thy father's pride, thy mother's joy.
What are thy little fingers doing,
What are thy little steps pursuing?

* * * * *

I hear those feet, so strangely bold,
Have often through the forest strolled,
To gather wild flowers sweet and bright,
To deck thy mother's room at night.

The day may never dawn for me,
When I thy face, my boy, may see,
But often still my thoughts shall stray
To thy wild home so far away.

No event in the life of the poetess had so great an influence on her works as this removal to Bournemouth. Always an ardent lover of the country, as told in many a page of her girlhood's poems, yet for twenty-eight years taking her place in "London society," and when not actually incapacitated by illness, fully occupying that place, she now returned to the country with delight. Thus she exclaims (Vol. xiv., page 19, "In the Watches of the Night"):—

Oh! in the calm, the wonderful sweet calm
Of these old woods, that seem so strangely far
From turmoil and from grief—that have a balm
To heal the wounded soul—and where the star
Of evening looks into uplifted eyes,
And where the deep roar of earth's cities dies.

Aye! in these lonely woods we think of spheres
That shall be far more beautiful than ours;
Where love may reign, where there shall be no tears,
And where shall be no wars of evil powers,
Where fruits shall ripen and where flowers shall grow,
Where summer smiles—where there is never woe.

Oh! shall we meet our dear ones there once more,
To look back on this earth as sad dreams past?
Full grateful that their bitterness is o'er,
That rest for troubled souls is found at last.
Rest, rest, and rest with God—and this, we trust
Shall be the new birth from our mortal dust.

And again—

* * * * * * *

Sweet days, fair days; and if a cloud of care
Seems sometimes on her widest plains to rest,
To even *know* that earth can be so fair
Is to be one of those whom she hath blessed;
Oh! sorrow and pain's bitter "after-blast"
Shall never make forgotten life's sweet past.

Her husband had always been so deeply impressed by the knowledge that the very heart of her life's prime —those years which might have been the happiest of all—had been distracted and spoilt by illness, suffering and sorrow (see page 37), that he determined to devote the rest of his life—now emancipated from the work of London practice—to trying, by every possible means, to bring her such happiness that the *brightness of the present might obliterate the dark memories of the past.*

Under his advice she determined not to return to that place on the "Social Treadmill" which her long illness *had compelled* her to resign, and in future to confine

her "society" to her family and old friends. The complete calm of their new home, referred to in the above lines, within sound of the sea, looking out upon a lawn, surrounded by tall trees of pine, silver birch, sycamore, chestnuts and ever-green oaks, screened by deep hedges of rhododendrons, arbutus, laurel and bay, and from its well-chosen site, commanding views of both sunrise and sunset, and of those lovely "Italian moonlights" for which Bournemouth is distinguished—this was exactly what both heart and mind had craved for, after all that had passed in the last twelve years of sickness, anxiety and grief. It had a marvellous effect in restoring both physical and nervous health.

They had built a picture gallery to receive some of the treasures collected in Harley Street (see Plate VII.), and in this house, surrounded by pictures, books, flowers and birds, in the intervals between the visits of "the children," who now called it "their country home," and of their parents, and of a few chosen friends of old—she worked indefatigably at composition and preparing for the press, as the best means of keeping away dreaded recollections. Many of those poems glow with gratitude for the return of health and peace, while they tell how great had been their need. Thus, we have recollections of illness:—

AH! GOD OF MERCY, I AM FREE.

Thou hast been my companion many years,
O pain! thy left hand pressing on my heart;
Thou wert regardless of my grief and tears,
Thy right hand ever ready with thy dart.

Thou wert with me through the long hours of night,
Bending as a dark shadow from the skies;

And when I sought to see the pale starlight,
A mask of iron was laid upon mine eyes.

And when I strove to think, my thoughts would stray
Into strange regions, filled with ghostly shapes,*
As one who strains to find a sweeter way,
But only by the gate of death escapes.

And if I sought to pray, my tongue would cleave
Even to my mouth, for *thou wert standing by*,
Nor yet my moaning bedside would'st thou leave,
Nor even let thy weary captive die.

So did I wait and weep, as time went past,
I seemed to have no friends *but one*—and Thee;
Ah! God of Mercy, I am free at last—
Thy hands my bonds have broken—I am free!

Again, we have—

THANKSGIVINGS.

I thank Thee, O my God, for the sweet hours
Spent on the shores of Thy most wondrous sea,
For the sweet fragrance of Thine earthly flowers,
For the fair song of bird from grove, from tree.

I thank Thee for this beauty, far and wide,
This glory—filling all broad plains of Thine;
The oaks and elms that clothe the fair hill-side,
The groves of peaceful and of pensive pine.

I thank Thee that I live to love these things,
These wonders that Thou hast created here;
And even to hear the nightingale, that sings
In Thy calm moonlight—sings and knows no fear.

I thank Thee that I live to see the light,
The glorious sunlight of Thy boundless skies;
As for the planets of Thy calmer night,
That shine down into mine adoring eyes;

* See p. 37.

I thank Thee that I live to see Thy glory
Upon the ocean, even as on the land;
To feel that there can be no grander story
Than that of the creations of Thy hand.

That all things Thou hast fashioned are for man,
And that I, even, am one in Thy great plan,
Whom Thou hast made, as from the very sod—
For all this do I praise Thee, mighty God.

Many fine passages are addressed to the sea, and to its surroundings, thus—

* * * * * * *

O'er yonder fretful deep
The light of countless planets hath been shed;
Their tragic legends still the billows keep,
Nor whisper of the dead.

They tell not to our ears
A tale of passing time, or coming doom;
The mysteries of a million rolling years
Lie silent in *that* tomb.

So on the smooth sea sands,
Beneath the angry storms of earthly skies,
We lift to Heaven our mute and helpless hands,
Our sad and blinded eyes.

O sea of unknown ages,
Thy secrets never shall be here revealed!
So shall the records of thy myriad pages,
Be as a book unsealed.

O never-sleeping waves!
I weary of your hollow, ceaseless moans,
Lamenting ever over unseen graves,
Built with primeval stones.

Thou world of restless thought,
Say! wilt thou ever find repose at last?
Or will all lessons that the heavens have taught
Die—with the dying blast?

Hush! there may come a time
For peace and joy, as well as times to weep,
And rest may therein dwell, complete, sublime,
Even on thy waves, O deep!

Hush! there may be a realm
Where lightning shall not burn, nor death affright;
Where winds shall not uproot, nor storms o'erwhelm,
And where—*there shall be light.*

Again—

THE WORLD OF WATER.

'Tis strange to look out on a world of waters,
To know it spreads for thousand miles away,
That countless of the earth's lost sons and daughters
Lie silently in cavern, gulf or bay;

That side by side, in depths unknown, may sleep
Those, foreign both by country and by name,
Yet rest together calmly in the deep,
Some good, or great—some stained by bitter shame.

Nor tomb, nor churchyard there shall be apart,
For monarch, subject, pauper, or for slave;
The brow of glorious bays, the broken heart,
All slumber in one undistinguished grave.

Pale corpses from a hundred differing lands,
Pale corpses from a thousand differing hearths;
O'er whom no gifts are strewn by loving hands,
Round whose rude tombs there wind no trodden paths.

* * * * * * *

THE SLEEPLESS VOICE.

Hopeless and dreary sound the billows wild,
Lifting their white heads to the stormy sky;
And where, till now, both youth and beauty smiled,
They gladly lay their burden down and die.

O foaming water, wilt thou *never* rest!
Is there *no* pause in thine impetuous race?
But fronting, still, despair with angry breast,
And baring to the storm thy livid face!

Light Upon the Sea.

O thou fair star! whose tender rays have kissed
The drifting outlines of the ocean mist—
How often I have watched thy steady light
Illumine the dark shadows of the night!

The sages of this earth can not divine
The many mighty secrets that are thine,
So jealously protected in thy march
Through heaven's magnificent and silent arch!

Even with our boasted wisdom we yet know
Of thee but little in our paths below;
Thou art a mystery, O thou star—and still
A mystery shalt remain, by Heaven's own will.

How softly dost thou shine upon the waves!
And, knowing every secret of the caves,
And every *rendezvous* of wildest shores,
Thy bright ray hundreds of strange haunts explores!

The centuries come and go, and we remain
But as a moment on earth's shifting plain;
Thou art for ever here, and yet, no less,
Thy secrets never mortals shall possess!

The Unfurling of the Flag.*

O Flag! whose colours, nobly won,
Have governed for a thousand years
The seas, where many an English son
Lies buried—wept with England's tears,
How gaily, as thy sailor's shout,
Thy unstained length is floating out!

Ah! flag of many a boastful story
Beneath our native British skies;
Ah! flag of honour and of glory,
How often fanned by widows' sighs!
Yet, oh! float out upon the breeze—
We shame thee with such thoughts as these!

* On seeing a new flag unfurled at Bournemouth.

That pure and stainless length hath waved
Where sea of unknown fathoms rages,
On rudest rock *thy* name engraved
Will tell a tale to unborn ages;
Fearless of storm and angry blast,
For ever shall thy glory last!

O flag! of conquest and of death—
O flag! whose records are of slaughter—
Thy sailors with their dying breath
Will shout thy victories o'er the water!
Float out—where'er the storms are high,
We win the fight for thee—or die!

Our sons will ever tell with pride
How, hand to hand, their fathers stood,
And fell together—side by side,
Nor wailed the loss of noble blood;
Float out, float out, o'er England's sea—
They slumber well who die for thee!

At the strong recommendation of the publishers and libraries, just before leaving London she had commenced her first three-volume prose work of fiction; and soon after removing to Bournemouth she published "Dark Pages: or, The Secrets of an Old Bureau" (Remington, 1882). The following passages from some of the reviews will show that this was well received:—

DARK PAGES.

(Opinions of the Press.)

She has the art of telling a story very well. . . . She can describe a good plot, can sketch interesting and even thrilling incidents. . . . They are eminently readable.—*Scotsman.*

Very considerable power is displayed. . . . Each of the three narratives has its ghastly and ghostly burden. . . . The style is beyond the average of our lady novelists. . . . Calcu*lated to rivet the* attention of her readers.—*Academy.*

There is force in every one of these three tales; there is *tuine descriptive* power.—*Spectator.*

There is a horrible attractiveness about the romance. . . . This episode is introduced with considerable instance . . . . is both well told and calculated to arouse the reader's curiosity. There is an element of pathos in the unfortunate Katrine's misplaced attachment.—*Morning Post.*

A capital book, worth "Dobell" (double) the money.—*Judy.*

There is a strong dramatic idea in the concluding part of the story.—*Daily Telegraph.*

Nevertheless, she did not take keenly to prose; and before "Dark Pages" were dry from the press she was again deep in poetry, and had made considerable headway with "In the Watches of the Night," of which eighteen volumes were eventually published between 1884 and 1888, containing 1,632 separate poems.

Her rapidity and promptitude in composition were always extraordinary, and her husband says that he "never could make out *when* she composed," for although they were always together, except when he was professionally engaged, and they always worked together at night; whenever he looked at what she was writing, or asked suddenly what she was doing, she was always "copying" or "revising for the press," never composing!

As an example of this promptitude and rapidity may be mentioned the composition of her well-known lines on the death of Gordon.

She was out in the carriage with her husband as usual, and, after attending a consultation, he came back to the carriage accompanied by Mr. Percy Thornton, M.P. (the historian). Mr. Thornton said to Mrs. Dobell, "Here is the *Times* just come, announcing the death of Gordon. You ought to write an ode upon it." To which she replied, 'No, I never could compose when

asked to do so." Her husband then went to another consultation close by, and on his coming back to the carriage she said, "Well, I have done it. I hope you will like it." "Like what," he asked. "My *Ode to Gordon*; here it is. I have scribbled it on the margin of the *Times*, for I had no paper." When they went home she copied it almost without a correction, sent it to Mr. Thornton at once, who posted it to Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, and it was printed in the next issue of *England*. We quote it to show how little it bears the traces of haste:—

Procrastination! So our hero fell!
And England, clothed in sackcloth, rings his knell!

More fatal harm upon this earth is wrought
By feeble steps than by men's rasher deeds,
And, harrowed by the lessons we are taught,
Each heart for England's noble soldier bleeds.

Procrastination! So our hero fell!
And England, clothed in sackcloth, rings his knell!

He, fearless, risked his life, and we—*we waited*
For some new meteor to dispel the gloom;
And he who thought all things were fated,
Strong in his faith, went onwards to his doom!

Procrastination! So our hero fell!
And England, clothed in sackcloth, rings his knell!

What say the bitter cynics of our days—
Are there no heroes and no martyrs now!
Will they refuse our sainted Gordon praise,
Nor crown with monumental wreath his brow?

Procrastination! So our hero fell!
And England, clothed in sackcloth, rings his knell!

Go! lay the garland on his tomb with tears—
Enrol his lofty name with England's great;

One to be honoured through all future years,
But one, alas! we honour now—*too late!*

This rapidity and capacity for work has characterised all she has done from childhood upwards. She was a typical instance of those readers mentioned by Professor Romanes, page 137 of his work on "Mental Evolution." "In a given time," he says, "one individual may be able to read four times as much as another, equally accustomed to extensive reading. . . . . and I have found that the most rapid reader is *also the best at assimilation.*" She seemed to take in the contents of a page at a glance. It was the same with sketching—while others were arranging how to begin, she had finished hers. This enabled her to take advantage of flying opportunities of getting interesting "bits." All her country visits with her children, no matter in what season, brought back full sketch-books; and after her children were grown up and she accompanied her husband on his professional "rounds" in London and its surroundings, she made a large collection of sketches of "Old London," and of interesting buildings, river scenes, etc., in its environs, most of them taken from the carriage window while waiting for him at hospitals, insurance offices, or consultations. In addition to these, she was able to get a variety of sketches in different parts of England, taken from railway stations, hotels, or carriage windows. For after the girls had married, her husband never travelled without her. This determination was come to because one evening, when she was thought to be convalescent, he received an urgent telegram, promising him a large fee, if he would go at once across Europe to see a patient. He had rapidly arranged everything for the journey, and a cab was at

the door to go to the station, when, on going to say good-bye to his wife, he was struck by what he feared was the threatening of a dangerous relapse, which her nurse and companion had failed to recognise.

Reversing all his plans, he at once decided to stop with her; and that night she was seized with an illness so acute and serious that had he not been there she would probably have died before morning. This determined him never again to accept any distant consultation unless it could be arranged for his wife to accompany him. Thus, during the last few years of their London life, when he was in the zenith of his fame, and summonses to distant places were frequently arriving, although the *majority had to be declined*, many flying journeys were made by husband and wife together; and while the physician attended his consultation, his wife, remaining at the hotel or railway station, or in a carriage, amused herself with her sketch-book. The difficulties of this position, as may be imagined, were so great that they had much to do with his decision to leave London for good.

This capacity for rapid work, accompanied by a remarkably good memory, enabled her in girlhood, when in a country village, out of reach of teachers, not only to learn French, German, and a fair amount of Italian, but to read the classical authors in these languages. (See page 8.) But it was accompanied by a strong distaste and, indeed, inability, for puzzling over a subject if it was not at once clear to her quick perception; thus, she would rather tear up a sketch than alter it materially. So, in argument, she was quick in apprehension and incisive in reply, but soon became confused if the subject was involved,

or if any complicated difficulty arose—the brain appearing to be too vivid in its action and the *timbre* too delicate to bear prolonged tension. Thus, she wrote:—

LOST IN ICELAND.

Ah, hush! this world has far too much
Of mystery for human touch!
Our narrowed thought, our febrile brain
Can bear but faint, but guarded, strain;
We see here with imperfect eyes,
We read not from eternal skies
What God deems fittest to bestow
Upon this *un*formed race below.

"IN THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT,"
Vol. iv., page 24.

And, again, she wrote (Vol. v., page 23):—

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE.

Something unstable in the brain of man
Still shows that it is powerless to embrace
The myriad wonders of Creation's plan—
The mysteries of Time, of Light, of Space.

This always made her very averse to repeated revisions of her compositions; as she wrote them down, so she liked to put them away, and revision for the press was so distasteful as often to induce her to pass over blemishes and to "let things go," rather than to puzzle over a troublesome error. It was much easier for her to compose something new than to re-cast what had once been put upon paper.

It is evident, however, that this inborn difficulty and aversion must have been well contended with, or she could not have got such a large mass of matter through the press with so few errors, even with her husband's help.

Their favourite hours for work were always at night, those usually devoted by her husband to his medical and scientific studies; but, as in the case of the "Ode to Gordon" (see page 88), some poems were composed during the daily carriage drives; and the mornings, while her husband was in his consulting-room, were occupied in copying, arranging and correcting for the press.

Mrs. Dobell must have composed nearly all of the poems published under the general title of "In the Watches of the Night" before beginning to print, because she classified them into separate volumes, according to the style of subject. This might lead any one taking up a single volume to think there was a monotony of subject, whereas the reviewers constantly refer to their great variety.

"From grave to gay, from lively to severe."

This wide range of subject is to some extent indicated by the titles of the eighteen volumes already published, 1886:—

Vol. I. "Too Late, and other Poems: Songs of Love and Sorrow."

Vol. II. "The Cavern by the Sea, and other Sea Songs and Traditions."

Vol. III. "An Incident in His Life, and other Poems."

Vol. IV. "Lost in Iceland, and other Poems."

Vol. V. "Eyes of Darkness, and other Poems."

Vol. VI. "The Voice of Dame Oracle, or Lays of the Pharisees."

Vol. VII. "The Angel's Visit: Poems of Prayer and Sorrow."

Vol. VIII. "Weird Mists, and other Poems."
Vol. IX. "Under the Stars, and other Poems."
Vol. X. "Lost in the Woods; or, The Cruel Coquette, and other Poems."
Vol. XI. "Wise Hints from an Old Ghost, and other Poems."
Vol. XII. "Darkest Before Dawn, and other Poems."
Vol. XIII. "A Midnight Banquet, and other Poems."
Vol. XIV. "In the Calm, and other Poems."
Vol. XV. "A Scrap-Book." *
Vol. XVI. "Echoes of Stage Thunder."
Vol. XVII. "Weighed in the Balance."
Vol. XVIII. "Songs and Tales for Children."

As the above contain 1,632 separate poems, space will not permit of our giving a sufficient number of extracts to illustrate the authoress's power of dealing with such varied and widely different themes; but some idea of this may be gained from the quotations interspersed through this sketch of her life, and from the following selections from the numerous and divergent opinions which have been expressed by reviewers, according to which volume they happened to have before them. One reviewer says:—

(1.) We are tempted to quote the first verse of some very fine lines in Vol. xv., on "The Departing Sun (an October Sunset)":—

So! "every inch a king," he goes to rest,
Throwing his last smile o'er the deep sea waters,
Leaving his mantle on the ocean's breast,
Soon to be gathered up by night's pale daughters!

* Divided into five collections. In this volume is inserted a JUBILEE ODE, composed *after the rest of the* volume was in type (1887).

(2.) What is most striking . . . . is their abiding freshness; . . . . the more she writes the more the poetic inspiration is apparent.

(3.) Full of feeling, redolent with the love of humanity, and beautiful in religious fervour.

(4.) Her great gift emanates from a heart whose strings are all in unison with that one great chord—sympathy.

(5.) Full of a passionate scorn and detestation of meanness, selfishness and hypocrisy.

(6.) Verses that depict human feeling, human sorrow and human hope. . . . It is manifest from many poems in Vol. xi. that the authoress is a woman of strong mind and firm will.

(7.) The words are throughout touchingly beautiful.

(8.) The pensive sadness which characterise many of the poems is lost sight of in "Songs of Heroes."

(9.) He must be a poor creature who does not rise from their perusal with his mind kindled to great achievements.

(10.) One of the most graceful, facile, graphic and sympathetic poets of the day. . . . There is a good deal of wit exhibited, as well as some pungent satire.

(11.) "Wolfine the Avenger" is a capital poem, full of imaginative thought, and yet in harmony with accounts of the olden times.

(12.) Vol. xv. contains an "Ode on the Jubilee"; it is written in a noble strain and is infinitely better than many similar compositions that have been published under more pretentious circumstances.

(13.) A tone of real earnestness, combined with true poetic thought and diction, always make the words of this talented lady acceptable. . . . The Queen's character is very tersely summarised in the "Jubilee Ode," in these lines:—

Not even misfortune's saddest, darkest frown
HAS EVER MADE OUR QUEEN, GOD, COUNTRY, HOME FORGET!

A large mass of manuscript remained unpublished at her death, chiefly written before removal from Streate Place, and forming a second and third series of "In the Watches of the Night," consisting of twenty-six volumes corresponding in size to the first series, but also comprising many notes on scientific, political and social subjects. These she was often urged to publish.* But after they settled at Parkstone Heights, with its new and delightful interests, and its fascinating calm, she did not care to return to the worry, excitement and distractions of public literary work.

In 1889, in consequence of a breakdown in Dr. Dobell's health, and the opinion of his medical friends that he would not recover while living at the seaside, they most reluctantly sold Streate Place, and took a flat at Carlisle Mansions, Cheyne Walk, London, having fine views over the Thames.† Mrs. Dobell's inability to walk upstairs led them to prefer a flat because of the lift.

During this residence of two and a half years they visited Mrs. Dobell's old counties of Hertford and Cambridge, staying at the old-fashioned inn, "The Bull at Royston." There was a special interest in that very comfortable old place, not only as the one which her family and herself had been accustomed to use when

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* The following sad note was found in her bureau after her death :—

"Nov., 1891.

"I contemplated the possibility that in the quiet of our new home, now nearly ready for occupation, I might publish the remaining volumes of my literary work. But a great affliction in connection with our eldest daughter, now in Australia, which has befallen my beloved husband and myself, seems to have *extinguished all ambition and taken all zest out of literary work*. My only desire now is to wait, with my dear one, for the closing scenes of this life, as patiently and peacefully as God will permit, with a heart full of gratitude for the love of my husband and of my youngest daughter, and for the kindly sympathy of her good husband, and of our other son-in-law, the widower of our much-loved daughter, Violet."

† From their flat they could see Turner's old cottage, from the roof of which he used to paint the river scenes. They could also see all across Battersea Park, the other side of the river, the Albert Bridge, Old Battersea Bridge, and the hills in the distance.

visiting Royston in her girlhood, but because it was there that the coach stopped when she and her future husband first met (see page 18), and at which the carriages were put up on the day of their marriage (July 5th, 1849). Dr. and Mrs. Dobell made delightful excursions to all the old places so dear to memory as those of their "sweethearting" days, made sketches of many of them, called upon their nephews and nieces, occupying the old family houses at Odsey, etc., etc.

From their flat in London they were able to make frequent visits to their married daughter and her husband (Mr. and Mrs. G. Broke Freeman), and to their widowed son-in-law (Dr. C. M. Tidy), and to entertain their grandchildren. Dr. Tidy was gradually sinking into the illness of which he died in March, 1892, and these visits, while of great comfort to him, became more and more distressing. After his death the only comfort was that he had left his two orphans, Zoë and Harry, amply provided for. But one great tie to London had gone, and they felt, with regard to Mr. and Mrs. Freeman's family, that it would be of more advantage to them if they had a nice country place to go to when visiting their grandparents than any London residence could offer.

The change to London proved quite unfortunate so far as the restoration of Dr. Dobell's health was concerned. The influenza epidemic set in bitterly soon after they went to Carlisle Mansions, and both were severely hit by it and its sequelæ. The hope that in London the various museums, exhibitions, concerts, etc., etc., could be visited as of yore, was defeated by Mrs. Dobell's inability to go up and down stairs, and this also made visiting impracticable. On the whole, there-

fore, it became clear that the return to London was a failure all round.

While at Streate Place they had been fortunate enough to secure the freehold of a little estate on Constitution Hill, Parkstone, affording the most lovely and unique building site in the county, perhaps in England; nearly 300 ft. above sea-level, overlooking at different points, Parkstone Village, The Sandbanks, the Purbeck Hills, Old Harry Rocks, the Channel, Brownsea Island, Poole Harbour, and the Backwater — extending to the Tichborne estates—besides inland country at the back, and on to Canford, Kinson, Wimborne, Longham Bridge and the Stour. The plot was a *wild* heath, overgrown with spring and autumn gorse, both kinds of heath and with heather; quite uncultivated, and partly on a flat plateau and partly running down the hillside towards the sea. But some eighty years ago a rich man from North America had selected this plot for a country house and grounds, and freely planted it with oaks, beech, chestnut, abundance of rhododendrons, and the beautiful creeping shrub, *Gaultheria schallen*, as well as numerous pines, chiefly Scotch. All of them had grown at their will, undisturbed by anybody but gipsies, wild birds and game—the favourite resort of the nightjar, hedgehog and squirrel.

They had held this lovely spot for several years, with a vague intention of some day building a house on it and living a completely quiet country life. This happy idea was for the time put out of court by the doctor's orders not to live near the sea. But as the move to London was gradually proving to be a failure, and as this spot was so high above the sea, and nearly three miles from the water, their thoughts turned more and

more back to the old idea, and they finally decided to leave London as soon as they had built a suitable residence at what they now named "Parkstone Heights, Dorset."

Dr. Dobell therefore carefully designed a house all on one floor, no steps or stairs, containing just the accommodation they required for themselves and the entertainment of their grandchildren, Zoë and Harry Tidy, and their daughter (Mrs. Freeman) and her husband and family, especially providing a fine library, which should be their "living-room," and a commodious bedroom opening out of it by a door in case of illness. This design he submitted to a good architect, who put the professional details into order, adhering strictly to Dr. Dobell's plans, both outside and in; and a contract was then entered into for its building by an old firm at Royston, well known to the Fordham family, and who, in consequence of a debt of gratitude which they owed Dr. Dobell, took a special interest in doing the work well, making it, in fact, "a labour of love."

To this unique place (see Plate VIII.) they finally removed in July, 1892, and at last Mrs. Dobell was placed in every way in surroundings suited to her condition of health, and congenial to all her natural tastes, her keen love of the beautiful in nature, and her girlish interest in gardening and purely country pursuits. They set to work vigorously to convert the little estate into "a thing of beauty," laying it out in wild heath and rhododendron walks, a spacious lawn in front of the house, surrounded by flower-beds and flowering shrubs, gravel walks beneath the trees on the slopes, and declivities, and keeping as much as possible of the original wild beauty, only adapting it to cultivated use.

Mrs. Dobell's special garden was in no sense a "show garden." She selected a part of the grounds as far away from the house as possible, so that she might be out of the way of disturbances, and go on quietly with her favourite work. This was the raising of plants, shrubs and trees from *seeds* and *cuttings*, and gradually converting a piece of heathland into a grove and shrubbery. It was a never-ending source of quiet pleasure. She had a great aversion to lying in bed, and if not absolutely incapacitated by illness she was always up to their half-past eight breakfast. She was always a careful but generous housewife, and directly breakfast was over her first business was to go to the kitchen and arrange the affairs of the day. She always told her servants "to be sure and have a jolly good breakfast, so as to begin the day's work cheerfully," and she found that this injunction had the good effect of taking all idea of *stinginess* from her careful and economical management.

This business finished, if weather permitted, she would stroll down to her garden and work away quietly till lunch time. On this spot there are now hundreds of trees and shrubs, some of considerable height, some only a few inches above the ground, having been planted as seedlings within the last two years.

Of course, Dr. Dobell had given up practice when he left Streate Place, and Mrs. Dobell had given up writing; they were both in their sixty-fifth year, and fairly tired out when they came to Parkstone Heights.

This place and its absolute calm, fine air and country pursuits, wonderfully restored the health of both; and from this time forth Mrs. Dobell principally occupied herself with housekeeping, needlework, gardening, reading—much and various—religious, fiction, travel, politics,

science, biography, etc., etc.—nothing came amiss to her ever-keen interest in everything; Dr. Dobell read out the more serious books for two or three hours of an evening, while she did her work—personal and household needlework, not *fancy*, this she never cared for. Of course, this place became a great favourite with the grandchildren, and as they were now old enough to be at various schools, it was her pleasure to have them down for holidays, from Marlborough and other public schools, and for "leave outs" from Winchester. There was not much to vary the above routine of life, for it must be remembered that all general visiting of strangers, not old friends, was definitely eschewed, and they asked the Vicar, an old patient of Dr. Dobell's, and the local doctors to let it be known that they did not wish to be "called upon," as their circle of acquaintance was already as large as they could manage.

A temporary break, which gave Mrs. Dobell great pleasure, was the removal of her favourite sister, the widow of Sydney Dobell, the poet, with her devoted friend, Miss Jolly, from their distant home in Gloucestershire to a house close to Parkstone Heights. Mrs. Sydney Dobell was considerably older than her sister, and in declining health, and, unfortunately, in June, 1900, she died suddenly; but Miss Jolly continued to occupy the house, which was left to her by Mrs. Sydney Dobell. A warm friendship grew up between Miss Jolly and Mrs. Dobell, and she proved a kind and helpful neighbour in all times of trouble and distress.

The greatest change, however, in their general pursuits came about by accident. In 1898, Zoë *Tidy left in* the care of her grandparents an [redacted] *violin which* they had given her when she was a

child. Dr. Dobell found that he could play a few tunes upon it by ear, in fact, his old whistling tunes; he had always a keen musical ear and taste, but had never had time to cultivate any instrument, and did not, in fact, know his notes. Mrs. Dobell, as stated before, was an accomplished musician, with an acute ear for time and tune. It much interested her, therefore, to help her husband to make out the old tunes (*her* old tunes, in fact) on the violin; and thus was gradually revived her love of music. It will be remembered that after her long illness in London, in which she lost her memory and her wonderfully beautiful and facile voice, she never attempted to sing again, and that after the death of Violet she could not bear to *hear music in the house.* Thus she wrote, in 1886:—

I know it seemeth strange to some, and yet,
I cannot bear to hear sweet music's strain;
It bringeth back the thoughts I would forget—
Aye! full of exquisite, if tender, pain.

Yes, music maketh sad beyond all speech,
It calls up spirits from grass-covered graves—
From spots to which can fancy only reach—
From lands that lie beyond our ocean waves.

That song! mine eyes were full of bitter tears
As on the air its thrilling echoes fell;
That song! heard in those far-off, dreamy years—
What legends of past griefs it seemed to tell!

"IN THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT,"
Vol. xiii., page 28.

Their "Broadwood's grand" was ever after silent, it had been quite untouched during the seven years at

Bournemouth, as well as for some time in London previously, and when they left Streate Place, in 1889, it was sold. At Parkstone Heights, therefore, there was *no musical instrument till the appearance of the old violin.* But the desire now rapidly grew in Mrs. Dobell's mind to accompany her husband's violin playing, and on her birthday, in 1899, he made her a present of another Broadwood. From that time forth an hour or two a day was delightfully spent in music. Dr. Dobell having learnt his notes and acquired a certain facility on his instrument, learnt up all the fine airs formerly sung by his wife, and she revived her accompaniments, thus adding this delightful variation to their country pursuits and to the amusement of the grandchildren—and so their world went on.

To the astonishment of every one, notwithstanding her loss of memory, for it never properly returned, and the crippled state of her right hand by rheumatism, she came back to her musical work with no loss of the keen appreciation of time, tune and harmony, and with an extraordinary facility of fingering, considering the state of her hands. In 1907 they were playing together 160 operatic, sacred and other pieces by the best composers, old and new—a selected programme being made out for each day.

Although Mrs. Dobell had several severe illnesses at Parkstone Heights, and was always more or less of an invalid, she rallied marvellously well between the attacks. She had a great dislike to "invalidism," and always returned, as quickly as possible, with delight to her garden, her books, and her music, so that on her eightieth birthday (March 8th, 1908), her daughter Horatia Freeman, was able to write to her:—

"To-morrow is a very special birthday, your eightieth, and I send you all kinds of loving wishes. It is wonderful how young you keep . . . tend the garden, play the piano, and get up to early breakfast. . . . I do hope your rheumatism is better, and that you will both have a happy birthday."

But her husband knew only too well that—

> The light of other days had faded,
> And all its glories passed;
> For Time, with heavy hand, had shaded
> Those hopes, too bright to last.

She had slowly declined ever since she underwent a serious operation in November, 1904, after the shock of which, and with a dread lest it might be necessary to repeat it, she became subject to alarming attacks of suffocation. They came on quite suddenly, generally in the night, but also occasionally in the day, lasting several hours, in spite of all remedies, so that her husband never dared to be *out of call*. Her power of locomotion had gradually diminished, especially after a severe attack of influenza and broncho-pneumonia in 1907, in which she nearly lost her life. Up to that time she had been able to walk down the grounds to her special garden and back, but after that attack her husband used to take her down to her garden in a wheeled chair and fetch her back. It also became necessary to put up a "storm shed" in her part of the grounds, to which she could retire in case of rain or when waiting for the chair.

In the end of 1907 and beginning of 1908 she suffered severely from rheumatoid arthritis and cramp in the legs at night, seriously interfering with sleep. In spite of all this her eightieth birthday, referred to in her

daughter's letter, was particularly calm and happy. But it was almost immediately followed by a violent attack of *Shingles*, from the terribly depressing effects of which she never recovered. As the loss of power of locomotion increased, she became unable to stand alone, and could only be moved about in a "Merlin chair"; the garden chair had to be abandoned. But in all the beautiful weather of the summer of 1908 her husband used to wheel her in her Merlin chair into the most lovely shady spots in the grounds, and there sat and read to her. She had lost all interest in modern fiction, but she never lost her interest in the affairs of *the great world*, religious, political, scientific or social, and the *Times* was daily looked for to distract her thoughts from her own sorrow. After four months of gradually increasing general *paresis*, she died of heart failure, August 1st, 1908, at 7.30 a.m., and was buried in Parkstone Cemetery, August 5th, a place by her side being reserved for her husband. (Plate IX.)

* * * * * *

They bore her from each well-loved, homely scene,
And from a country home both fair and grey,
From beechwood forest, and from meadow green,
They bore her, with slow, winding steps away.

* * * * * * *

Ah! place the withered roses on her bier—
O Life! O Love! my last sweet hope lies here;
I know I call thee back, beloved, in vain—
Thou can'st not brighten my sad life again!

"IN THE WATCHES OF THE NIGHT,"
Vol. xv., pages 136-7.

Her love of music never faded, and when too weak to play his accompaniments, which had been a source of

so much delight to them both, her chief pleasure, up to two days before her death, was to hear him play on the violin some of their favourite tunes.

They had always prayed that she might die before her husband, knowing that no other hand but his could do what he had so long done for her as physician, husband and nurse. This prayer was granted them.

They were such devoted lovers to the end, that the lines written in 1880 might have been written with equal truth on the last day of her life:—

Yes, *as thou lovest me*, so, dear, do I
Love thee, with all my soul, with all my heart;
Have I not told thee I should surely die
If thou and I were on this earth to part?

* * * * * * *

No human power our hands' fond clasp shall sever,
Love! While thou livest I am thine for ever;
Nay! nor in future realms mine eyes can see
A life—a state—that is not passed with thee.

* * * * * * *

No, love, I fear not death! *yet greatly fear*
To leave thee lonely, O mine own! For this
I dread, since I, of all, to thee am dear;
In kissing me thou givest love's last kiss.

* * * * * * *

And thou wilt miss me under winter skies,
When blighting snow is lying on the lea,
And thou can'st meet no more mine answering eyes—
Their light is lost upon this earth to thee.

And thou wilt need me in the summer days,
Yes! thou wilt ask for me at eventide;

And looking—nothing, love, will meet thy gaze,
  And feeling—nothing, love, is at thy side.

Oh, love, not long may'st thou be desolate;
  Thy faithful heart shall in its season soar
Into the realms where I shall ever wait
  To rest upon thy heart for evermore.

We venture to believe that no impartial critic can read Mrs. Dobell's works and this "Life Sketch" without being impressed with the unsullied loveliness of her mind, and with its remarkable versatility and fertility; with her love of God and fearlessness of man; her deep affection and devotion to her husband, children and home; her love of Nature; her refined tastes; her artistic talents; her industry; and her hatred of injustice, hypocrisy, humbug and superstition, whether lay or clerical. As one of the reviewers of her works said, "They are full of passionate scorn and detestation of meanness, hypocrisy, selfishness and tyranny."

She seldom allowed her emotions to appear on the surface, and their depth, which was profound, was known to very few. Her friends, as a rule, had no idea of their existence, but they were "strong as death." Yet, withal, there was nothing masculine in her character. She was a true woman; she scorned the idea of women deserting their high functions to assume those of men; and her generous heart* never *coveted* anything except love.

All her life she had been an earnest student of the Bible, upon which alone she based her religious faith, which was simple, pure and strong from first to last. (See page 8.)

* As her rule always was "not to let her left hand know what her right hand did," it would not be fair, even if possible, to disclose her private acts of benevolence.

In Vol. xvii., page 22, of "In the Watches of the Night" she wrote:—

Take thou thy footsteps in this life with care;
See that thy lips are true—thy conscience clear;
Not even to save a spirit from despair
Can mortal footsteps be retrodden here.

And again, Vol. xii., page 59:—

* * * * * *

I thought how silent seemed Thy voice, O God!
These many centuries, as they onward rolled,
Until the creatures, sprung from thine own sod
Begin to feel their faith and hopes grow cold.

I pondered greatly why no more evolves
From earth's long centuries of human dust,
Yet felt that still the stronger soul resolves
To hold his faith and live his life in Trust!

And again, Vol. xii., page 65:—

How long wilt Thou look down on earth—how long
O God! shall darkness veil Thy coming day?
Our ears hear ever the triumphant song
Of sinners marching swiftly on their way!

How long wilt Thou look down on earth—how long
Let laurel wreaths adorn the brow of sin,
And see the race for ever to the strong,
While greed the prizes of this earth shall win!

How long wilt Thou look down on earth—how long
Shall all Thy hills the feet of evil scale,
And glory's shining crown be one of wrong,
And rapine evermore repeat her tale!

How long wilt Thou look down on earth—how long
Ere Thy strong lance of justice shall be hurled,
And we no more may see the eager throng
That crowd the darker pathways of this world!

How long wilt Thou look down on earth—how long
Shall yet the advent of that cycle be,
When earth shall hear but the triumphant song
Of peoples marching on the road to Thee!

We will conclude this sketch by quoting the following touching prayer, written in 1885, Vol. vii., page 93, "In the Watches of the Night":—

Father! Thou hast been merciful beyond
All expectations of Thy grace—of mine—
Thou dost forgive me even that I despond
And, foolishly, *in some dark hours*, repine.

I know, too well, that I am rarely meek;
I know, too well, mine is a stubborn heart;
I know, too well, that I am often weak,
And need Thy help to play a higher part.

That golden help I ask of Thee, O God!
The help that Thou hast ever given to prayer;
The thorny pathways that my steps have trod,
I now will tread with hope, not with despair.

Thy hand to guide me in the gloomy night
Thy hand to bind the bitter wounds that bleed;
Thy hand to point out all fair paths of light,
I know, O God! is all in life I need.

That help is promised unto all that pray
With earnest faith and with repentant tears;
Oh! guide us ever to Thy higher way,
Through the dark pitfalls of our earthly years.

POSTSCRIPT BY HER HUSBAND.

I thank God! Oh! I thank God, with all my heart and with all my soul that it is *not* my sweet, darling love who has to endure the terrible ordeal of being left behind to finish this earthly life in a desolated home. But I do not forget our sacred promises, made *so* long ago—binding now as then.* Grant, O Lord! that THIS ABSENCE may not be longer than I can bear. "I am aweary, I am aweary, and I would that I were dead."

Nevertheless, not my will but Thine de done.

* See "Absence," 1846, p. 18.

NOTE.—Mrs. Dobell's principal illnesses referred to in this sketch, some of which were very long and tedious, were Rheumatoid attacks, 1856—1865; Scarlet Fever, 1865; the long illness with spinal complications referred to in the letter, p. 37, 1871; Sciatica, 1896 and 1897; Illness which culminated in a serious operation. 1904; Influenza and Pulmonary Complications, 1907; Rheumatoid Arthritis and Cramp, end of 1907 and beginning of 1908; Shingles, March and April, 1908, leading to gradually increasing Paresis during May, June, July, and ending during the last three days in Paralysis Agitans, and death by heart failure, August 1st, 1908. In her final illness, up to the last conscious moment, there was no aberration of intelligence.

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